WHEEL-CHAIR PHILOSOPHY

JOHN LEONARD COLE

Class _____

Book _____

Copyright N°._____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

WHEEL-CHAIR PHILOSOPHY

BY

JOHN LEONARD COLE

Introduction by

WILLIAM VALENTINE KELLEY

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

BV4585
.C58

Copyright, 1913, by
JOHN LEONARD COLE

#.75
©Cl.A350824
BL01

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

The Call to the Chair 1

CHAPTER II

Lessons Learned in a City Hospital 21

CHAPTER III

Lessons Learned in a Sanitarium..... 70

CHAPTER IV

Cui Bono? 112

CHAPTER V

From the Chair into the Pulpit 135

A NOTEBOOK

Kept by a Pupil During a Two Years' Course in the School of Affliction

Being Some Reflections on Life, Scripture, and Events, Not Formulated in the Schools of Erudition, but Painfully Evolved in the School of Affliction and Disappointment, Under the Loving Guidance of the Head-Master, Who Has Been Through a Course More Severe, and Taken Highest Degrees in the Same; Now Set Down in Order, as Enunciated from the Chair, with the Hope that Some Who Are Grappling with the Same Difficult Problems May Find Cheer to Lighten the Task, and Encouragement to Look Up to the Perfect Teacher and on to the Prize.

INTRODUCTION

This book of tragic origin is one of the few real books; born, not made; extorted, not planned. First it was lived, and then it wrote itself; a plain artless narrative of austere experience, belonging in that respect in the same general class with General Grant's Memoirs and Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery: real records, vivid and true and terse and tense from start to finish.

In his "Easy Chair" in the back of Harper's Monthly Magazine George William Curtis sat for many years discoursing mellifluous wisdom on many themes with inimitable charm, irresistible persuasiveness, and unsurpassed dignity; all his fine faculties in free, graceful, splendid play, making the "Chair" as "easy" for him as he made it attractive to thousands. To that most gifted editor in his "Easy Chair" multitudes listened as to Aldrich's

Hassan Ben Abdul at the Ivory Gate of Bagdad; "and when he spoke, the wisest, next to him was he who listened."

There's a reason why multitudes should listen to our brave friend discoursing here in this little book from his Uneasy Chair; so far, indeed, from being easy as to be synonymous with pain, privation, and dependence, its occupant, the broken, wasted, haggard remnant of a young man, helplessly chafing against his powerlessness, but dauntless forever in his unconquerable soul and never letting go his dearest hopes and most cherished plans.

This Wheel-Chair discourse has one value not possible to "Easy-Chair" philosophy. Its poignant pathos has such a penetrating note of reality as will pierce the hearts of all who read. Its web is woven of reality upon the loom of actual life; every thread of it is authentic, spun not of fancies or hearsay, but out of a brave sufferer's own sensitive vitals, after the silkworm's fashion.

However slightingly any may be accustomed to think of philosophy in general,

none can despise or discredit this Wheel-Chair Philosophy. Some may share the contempt Romeo felt for philosophy when the Friar commended it as "adversity's sweet milk," and may nod approvingly at Shakespeare's scoff, "There was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache patiently." But here is philosophy at which none may scoff, since it has endured prolonged torture compared to which the toothache is a brief titillation, the momentary tickling of a feather; philosophy not framed at leisure in "the still air of delightful studies," but hammered into shape at white heat between the furnace and the anvil. Through age-long sleepless nights and days of dire agony these chapters knit themselves into coherence amid circumstances from which the world would no more look for philosophy to issue than it would expect Kipling's toad under the harrow to evolve a philosophy when iron tooth-points were crushing his bones and tearing out his entrails.

When we sit back and contemplate this

little book after reading it, it seems like a tray full of bright double eagles, gold tried in the fire and purified of dross, coined in the mint of sharp experience, and stamped with the superscription "In God we trust"; and worth more for the actual business of practical life than all the theodicies ever elaborated in the peaceful seclusion of a theologian's comfortable study.

Out of his wheel chair our philosopher stepped at last, "a walking miracle." To find himself after so many long months able to take a slow, creeping walk on two crutches down the carpeted hall of the sanitarium was to him, he tells us, "the cause of as great joy and as much congratulation as the winning of a Marathon race would be to an athlete." The writer of this introduction stood by that wheel chair now and then, and later witnessed some of those first painful attempts to walk. The author's amazing recovery and restoration to his "loved employ" full of the pluck and buoyancy of tested faith

and of valiant young manhood seem almost like a miraculous fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa. 35. 6: "The lame man shall leap as an hart."

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish, come" and listen to this tragic and triumphant story. It will do good to those who desire good and are of the upright in heart. From these pages you may feel the thrill of an intrepid faith and catch the contagion of unbounded cheer. Our wheel-chair philosopher will show you a stone that can transmute things to gold; on it is engraven, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

He hands you in this sincere and artless little book a flask of real *Eau de Vie*, the true Water of Life.

William Valentine Kelley.

New York, 1913.

CHAPTER I

The Call to the Chair

August 8, 1911. The call to occupy the wheel chair of philosophy came to me just one year ago to-day. Without any seeking for it on my part the summons came, very abruptly and unexpectedly. 'Twas on this wise:

On Monday morning I walked across the fields still wet with dew, swinging my dinner pail and whistling. I was happy. I had every reason to be happy that morning. On the day before I had worshiped God with a friendly congregation in a quaint old country church. The afternoon of Sunday I had spent walking out in the sunshine with my father, looking up at the foothills of the Adirondacks which encircled us and nosing around in an old graveyard, deciphering moss-covered inscriptions on the stones. After a good night's sleep I had opened my eyes to a

new week, with new work, and new zeal to be at it. I had a right to be happy that morning. I had a body every muscle and nerve of which was strong and responsive; a good digestion; a clear mind; and every moment was being soothed and rested by the loveliness and grandeur of the hills and skies.

Then, too, I was happy because I was part of a great construction work. Though lost amid the din of concrete-mixers, the shouts of swarthy laborers, and the clang of the ironworkers, still I was a part of the busy, noisy scene. While very hidden and insignificant, my place was there somewhere, and I was actually helping to build the huge brick-and-iron buildings which were some day to be a new million-dollar State's prison. And at work that day I was happy because it was all so different from the quiet, studious life which had always been mine. From cloistered walls and university libraries it was a far cry to this wild jumble of noise and confusion. And, as a change, the absolute

transformation of circumstances was most welcome. To a man who has for years handled nothing more rough than a baseball or a tennis racket, the feel of a shovel or plank is refreshing. And so, that morning, I took real delight in digging out pointed stakes instead of Greek roots; I enjoyed more wrestling with big wooden panels than I ever did wrestling with Hebrew radicals or irregular verbs. The sudden jump I had taken from gentle meditation to genuine manual labor had landed me in a beneficial and pleasant environment. Now, instead of developing gray matter, I was toughening muscle and contracting a glorious brown tan. Then, too, I was happy because I was working with my father. For six years I had been "acquiring an education"—living in a different world from him, growing inevitably, though unwillingly, somewhat apart from him and his interests. Now I was in his world, working at his side, and learning to look at things from the viewpoint of the man who toils with his hand instead of his

brain. Of course I could not be equal to him in this sphere; here, he was the expert, the master carpenter, and I but a bungling assistant. But still, we were together. Side by side we worked, enjoying a comradeship that we had never known before.

During the noon hour that Monday father and I sat together on a pile of lumber. All around us were iron girders, bricks, and bags of concrete. While the Italians devoured their hunks of black bread soaked in water, we emptied the two dinner pails which our generous landlady had filled that morning. All ignorant how pertinent the subject was soon to be, we chatted with other workmen, who had turned that corner of the building into a restaurant, about the possibility of accident, chances of reimbursement, and especially the hazardous work of the ironworkers, who were near us erecting the great steel partitions for the prison.

Less than a month later one of those young ironworkers, who had just married and brought his bride to live with him in

our boarding house, was carried past the door of my hospital room on a stretcher.

The whistle blew the close of noon hour. The "mixer" began again its noisy turning. The ripsaw whirled and buzzed. The shouts of the drivers, rousing the reluctant horses, rose and fell, and the resounding clang of iron and the pounding of carpenters' hammers began anew: the human hive was again the scene of industry. Father and I, with another carpenter, were sent to board up a shed where bags of cement were stored. At one end of the shed a derrick was busy hoisting and dumping great buckets of dirt from a manhole. For perhaps an hour we worked together—the two carpenters boarding up, or, more properly, "planking up," for the boards were planks two inches thick and fifteen feet long. We were about half through with building the wall when, to bring father the next plank, it was necessary for me to go under the derrick standing near the end of the shed. Carefully I stood, holding the plank, until the great

bucket was filled, the two horses had raised the beam with its load, and the men were ready to swing it and dump it at our side and far above our heads. Then, lugging my plank, I started, knowing there was plenty of time to reach the carpenters who were waiting for it. In all human reckoning there was time—just a step, a second—and any remote possibility of danger was out of the question. As far as human sight and knowledge went the liability of disaster was infinitesimal.

But, after all, human sight and human knowledge go a very short way. Into the things before us we can see little further than our nose. In the last critical test our sight is blindness, our knowledge is ignorance. With human calculation putting the chances a million to one against disaster, I started on my journey of twenty feet, carrying the plank at my side. A step forward, firm and unhesitating—it was my last! Without a second's warning, the rope that supported the overhanging boom snapped, the great boom fell, dragged down

by the heavy load of dirt and its own ponderous weight, and I was crushed between it and the plank I still clung to. Utterly ignorant of what had happened, I was pressed, face down as in a vise, between the ground and the plank below and the boom above me. To probably not a score of living persons is it possible to convey any adequate impression of that sensation of being squeezed—almost—to death. With that derrick grinding down through my back I believe I felt the sensation that a grain of tiny corn must feel—if it has nerves—caught between the upper and nether millstone. Unconsciousness—that blessed relief from many of life's hardest pains—did not come. I heard men shout, though I didn't realize what it was all about; I saw my feet and legs wiggling in a sort of convulsive shudder, and I wondered why they did, when I didn't will them to. But worst of all was the terrible crushing sensation, as though the weight of the whole world were centered on the lower part of my back; the awful burden 'neath

which it seemed as if I must be ground to powder, although it could have lasted only a few seconds, was the most terribly oppressive sensation I hope I may ever have to suffer. Even now I shudder when, sometimes in the night, memory of that horrible moment flashes over my mind, and, by a strong effort of the will, I strive to banish even the recollection of that crushing pain.

I remember I uttered in the moment of my deepest pain, "O Father." It was all that I said while in the clasp of death, but in it were wrapped up unutterable words of protest against the unfeeling, cruel thing that seemed to be crushing me without provocation—an appeal for him to remove that thing, which, as far as I could see, was a bolt of thunder from a clear sky, and which, instead of killing me, was just torturing me by bearing down remorselessly upon the small of my back.

Whether that "O Father" was directed to my heavenly or earthly father I do not know. Both must have heard it. The

miracle that kept the boom from crushing through my skull in the first place, and has preserved me alive after suffering a broken back, convinces me that my heavenly Father heard me. And the fact that my earthly father was the first one at my side, to haul me out when men raised the derrick a little, convinces me that my weak cry must have reached his ear too, almost before it was uttered. With a pain at his heart which must have been sharper than mine my father helped put me on a stretcher, and men carried me to a tent where were a cot and some simple restoratives. For the latter I had no desire. I had no feeling of sickness—no idea of fainting, and didn't see why I should swallow the glass of whisky several pressed upon me. The only thing that troubled me was that continued pressure on my back, and the fact that I couldn't move either leg a bit. I could see men slapping and rubbing and working my legs, but I couldn't feel them, nor help them move me at all. An Italian, who had been hit in

the head with the iron bucket, lay at my side, groaning as though he were in the pangs of death, but I didn't feel like groaning, and was only a little sorry to have everyone making such a fuss over me.

To me it seemed as if friends had sprung up out of the ground; willing hands and anxious faces were everywhere. Rough bosses and engineers, who had barely noticed me before, had stopped shouting and cursing and were doing everything in their power to make me comfortable. One big Irish boss was even so considerate, when I refused to drink the tumbler of whisky offered me, as to swallow it down at a gulp, saying something about it being "a shame to waste it."

After an hour or so a doctor came in his automobile and looked me over: poked and pricked my extremities, and finally injected something into my arm to keep me up during the journey to a hospital, which, it appeared, I was to make. It was about time for a train to the city (some hundred miles away), so some men prepared to

carry me to the station, a distance of half a mile. At first they tried a stretcher, but the least move shot such a pain through my back that they had to use another expedient. Putting poles under the whole cot on which I lay, they lifted me very carefully and carried me thus, keeping step, and jarring as little as possible. The kindness of those rough men and some of the engineers I can never forget. On the way down to the station one of the office men ran out and gave me a drink, which, when I managed to get some into my mouth, lying straight out as I was, was very refreshing. At the station I was hoisted, cot and all, onto a baggage truck and began my first ride in a baggage car. Since then I have had considerable experience riding in the side-door Pullman, but at that time it was a novel experience to be shoved into a baggage car with trunks and boxes.

Then began a seventy-mile ride that is unforgettable. While I was not in a continual pain, any jolt or twist that moved

my back produced an excruciating pain where the spinal column was fractured; so I had to lie absolutely straight, unable even to raise my head, and momentarily dreading a jar which would shoot a dagger through my back. I was afraid to have the train start, afraid to have it stop. The setting of the brakes was a warning to me that agony was coming. And yet the journey was made without extreme discomfort. As usually proves true, the worst blows, severest pains, were those which never came. I don't know whether the engineer of that train saw the cot being pushed into the baggage car, and tried to be careful; whether some one instructed him, or whether he was just utterly unconscious of running smoothly, but it always seemed to me as though he started and stopped his train with as little bumping as possible—and I blessed him for it. The care and attempted gentleness of all the trainmen, the interest and solicitude of the conductors as they came out to collect tickets—those things are bright

spots in the memory of that dark ride to terrible uncertainty.

I really felt more sorry for my poor, heart-broken father during that three hours than for myself. He sat beside me every instant, trying to support and comfort me, outwardly little perturbed, but weighed down, I knew, at heart, with the saddest grief and remorse that had ever come into his life. Here was the youngest of his three boys, just ready to begin the work of life—God's work—stricken down at his side, absolutely helpless, and suffering internal injuries that probably meant death. The despair, the uncertainty of it all was keener suffering to him than any physical anguish that I knew.

Night was just settling down over the city of T—— when we arrived at the station. No sooner had the train stopped than three men came into the car and joined father at the side of my cot. A doctor, an interne, and a representative of the Construction Company—each of them fine, and thoughtful of my comfort.

Quickly I was transferred to the ambulance, the interne climbed in beside me, and we were off to the city hospital. Up, up, the horses dragged us. Though I could see nothing but the sides of the wagon, which looked like a hearse, I knew we were climbing a very steep hill—the angle was almost sharp enough to be climbing the side of a cliff. But just a few minutes, during which the kind interne had found out the colleges I had attended, and we were at the receiving door of the hospital where I was either to live or to die, with the chances mostly in favor of the "die"; but, as it appeared later, to live, and learn lessons of eternal importance.

Thus it was that my "call" came to enter the Chair in the University of Affliction and Disappointment. Thus far, it is true, it seemed to my friends more like a bed in the halls of death. But the Lord, it appeared, had graduate work in the school of life for me yet to take, in preparation for the chair aforementioned.

I am aware that it is not in accordance with the strict canons of art to stop in course of a story and "moralize." But this is not a "story" in the accepted literary sense, but a recital of personal experiences, a history of the most vital facts in my life, and record of the thoughts inspired by those experiences. So, while it may offend some literary regulations, it will be a more faithful transcript of actual experience if I pause now and then to express the inner meaning of some outward events. The significance and deductions I may draw are not gleaned from far and near reading or hearsay, but are offspring of my own mind, born in travail and pain of the hardest experiences of my life. And these are properly interposed in the train of events nearest those happenings which gave them birth.

It is as a man in old age returning to the village where he was born. The river that winds around and through the village is not a mere ordinary channel filled with commonplace water. That river is the

place where he used to swim—there he dove in, here he waded before he dared to swim, along this bank he walked a thousand times and cast in hook and line. The house yonder on the hill is not an ordinary structure of wood. It is the "old home" about which cluster memories of mother, father, brothers now departed, too sacred to tell anyone outside that inner circle of loved ones. The school, the barn, that tree are not mere outward objects, but symbols of boyhood joys, liberty, fun, frolics, and dreams, which are entirely apart from the material nature of those things unconnected in the mind of a casual beholder, but inseparably related in the mind of the man whose boyhood days were spent along with them. So the events related herein are not set forth as a narrative, interesting or exciting in themselves. But the mere accidents, sufferings, and pleasures that happened to my body are teeming with deeper lessons—holy inspirations—which, in my memory of the events, are inseparable, and of greater importance.

These lessons constitute the deductions and "philosophy" which bodily suffering has ground into heart and mind, and this experience has, I believe, qualified me to expound *ex cathedra* these lessons of patience, trust, faith in prayer, and humility that have been so painfully yet clearly revealed to me. As through an opening rudely battered, but with kind intent, has the light streamed that has brought cheer and brightness in dark places, dispelled gloom, and banished doubt.

"Like as a Father Pitieth His Children"

Even the fact that we are working with our Father is no guarantee against accident overtaking us and distress coming upon us. God does not insure his most devoted laborers immunity from disease or sorrow. While we are most ardent about our Father's business, immersed in the most unselfish labor for him, the blow may come; and sometimes it seems as if the very choicest of his fellow workmen were the most conspicuous marks for every storm of

adversity; blow after blow is rained upon them till they *seem* crushed by the very God they are trying to glorify, like a David or a Job, a Robertson or a Matheson. So far from promising freedom from trouble, our Father even says that whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

But this he does promise: his pity and sustaining grace. "Though he fall, *he shall not be utterly cast down.*" God never promised the upright man no falls, but he did guarantee deliverance, freedom from complete dejection and overthrow. In the blow that we bring upon ourselves, the disaster which has seemed to shipwreck all our earthly hopes, we can remember that God watches us in pity and love, and his heart is grieved as sorely as our own. "Like as a father pitieth"—there is no pity as deep, as rich as the father's. The love and pity of a mother is tender and long-suffering, but the love of a father goes 'way down into the roots of his being; it is beyond measure or expression. Until

now I can see the care and anxiety written on my father's face as he watched beside me in the baggage car. No man will ever know the darkness of the woe in which he was plunged that fateful afternoon until he has heard a cry for help, rushed to a prostrate figure pinned down under a fallen derrick, pulled it out, limp and quiet, to look on the face of his own child. That was the cup my father had to drink—enough to wrench the heartstrings of any man living; yet after such a shock he sat and watched me for hours, uttering not many words with his mouth, but speaking volumes in the pity written on his face.

All through those days and nights when I hovered between life and death the true pity of no one was more certainly, genuinely, though quietly expressed than his. I saw now how the psalmist could find no higher type of the unfathomable pity of God for his suffering child than the pity of a father for his boy who lies in pain.

"Be Ye Therefore Ready"

How very thin and tenuous is the line that separates us from death or despair! In the midst of life, joy, and confidence, we are in death, misery, and hopelessness. The carpenter whistles at his work. A crash, a blow, and he is crushed like an insect 'neath the heel of man. The athlete, with life and energy superabundant, leaps for the vaulting bar. A strain—a snap, and he is helpless, maybe, for life. The scholar, proud in his giant intellect, victor of worlds of hidden knowledge, puts the final tension upon his brain. Something snaps inside—and he is a pitiful, hopeless imbecile. The line that divides our strength from weakness, buoyancy from invalidism, life from death, has neither breadth nor thickness. Therefore let no one of us glory in our strength or our intellect. The breath of our boasting may be the last. But he that glorieth let him glory in God, his Maker and Preserver.

CHAPTER II

Lessons Learned in a City Hospital

"Hospital Days"

There was heard a few years ago a popular song, the chorus of which, containing the words, "School days, school days," possessed a most irresistible swing. One day, as I lay in my room in the hospital, I tried to revise it to suit modern and local conditions, and sing it to my nurse in a more appropriate version of "Hospital days, hospital days." But neither singing nor versification seemed to go very well, though the audience did murmur something about "a howling success." But now, as I look back upon them, I realize that "hospital days" *are* "school days." The time spent in hospital was for me—and, I suspect, is for everybody—a period of liberal education, and the leading course on the curriculum is patience. Give a man time enough in

the course (some require longer than others) and the average hospital will turn him out with a well-earned "Pt.D.," "Doctor of Patience," and he will thoroughly understand what I have laboriously worked out, without the aid of, if not without the approval of, books, that the word is composed of one Latin word, *Patior*, "I suffer," and one English word, "sense"—"I suffer with sense," or "sensibly." That is "patience."

The hospital opened a strange and unfamiliar world to me. I think that the average man, who has never had any more serious physical trouble than teething, will find a hospital, with its peculiar odor, its quiet, linoleum-covered halls, white beds and white-capped, gliding figures, a weird, awe-inspiring place. I know that, when I was carried in on a stretcher and put down on a little white cot in a private ward, it was all strangely different from anything I had ever seen. I had prayed, sincerely, for "the sufferers in our hospitals," but had never seen one; now I was one. Yet it was not an unpleasant

place to be either. Here were plenty of good friends, apparently, and an inviting, clean bed which seemed to have been made ready, as though I were expected. But to get over on to that bed cost sharp agony, for even in being lifted that few feet, and as carefully as attendants could do it, my back was pierced as with a knife. Once there on the bed, straight out and still, I wished that I might never have to be moved again.

That first night in a hospital comes back to my mind like a horrible ghost out of the past. It was the worst, I believe, of all the nights I spent there—and hospital nights are infinitely worse than "hospital days." With a fractured backbone, a nervous system shocked throughout and utterly paralyzed in the lower half of my body, and with unknown internal complications working dreadful ills, you may imagine that it was neither a quiet nor a peaceful night. Sleep did not come near me. Bells rang and whistles blew; some one in an adjoining room groaned every little

while; I could still feel that hard boom pushing into my back until I thought I should die of the pressure. All that I wanted was water, and many times during that night, which seemed more like a century, a good lady in blue and white tried to satisfy my thirst. Since I could not raise my head a bit, getting a drink was awkward, but after many expedients she finally got some water into my mouth by means of a long tube, in the side of which had been cut a hole, like that in a flute.

"Sister Mary"

I had not been long in this place of strange sights and sensations when I looked up and saw, at the foot of my bed, a new and a strange figure. There, quietly gazing at me, with a half-critical, half-pitying eye, stood a black-robed woman with a white starched linen hat and a chain of black beads around her neck. Being unused to the regalia and the quiet, dignified mien of a nun, I was somewhat disturbed, espe-

cially as she stood in stolid silence and calmly looked me over. At last she spoke a word or two and quietly passed on, not to my regret. I began then to realize that I was in a Catholic hospital, and this was a head nurse, a Sister of Charity. It was my first glimpse of "Sister Mary" of the order of Saint Joseph. Despite this inauspicious introduction, she proved to be one of my firmest friends, a genuine sister of charity, who, under a somewhat dignified exterior, carried a kind and charitable heart. Among friends of any denomination I have none who strove to do more deeds of kindness and good will than this same Sister Mary; in the religion of mercy and helpfulness, the simple religion of Him who went about doing good, I am proud to be a worshiper together with Sister Mary.

Mother and Brother Come

Along in the middle of that century—the first night—father brought in my brother and my mother. My darling mother stood off, her face covered with

anguish, and looked at me as though it were all incomprehensible to her fond mother-mind that I should be there, broken and helpless. All my life long she had sheltered me from every pain and disappointment, but now, despite her lavished care and love, I lay before her in pain, apparently sinking slowly to death, and she was powerless to stop me. And my brother —how good and kind he looked as he stood with his arm around our mother! Only one other face (that of my betrothed) did I look upon with such delight as I did upon my mother and elder brother. It seemed to me they were so very kind, especially my brother, who I knew was busy, to come down there, thirty miles from home, in the middle of the night to see me. The visit of angels would have brought no such deep peace and repose in my heart as the presence of those two dear ones. I began to comprehend why Jesus invites people to enter heaven for such works as that— "Sick and in prison, and ye visited me."

It was over at last—that long, dark

night. The nurse who had given me the water went off duty and a new one came on. By the light of a new day I began to look around me. I was in a room with three other cots, one of them empty. Another room, similar, and with more people in it, opened off mine, and from there had come the groans during the night. A nurse, with a round, kind face, pretty blue eyes, and a smile like a ray of sunshine, came to wash my hands and face, and feed me my breakfast. Across the room I saw a man raising himself, with a little help, to eat his breakfast, and said, in envy, "I wish I could do that." "Wish you could, pard," he returned, with the brotherliness common to fellowship of sufferers in a hospital. But I had to lie perfectly flat and eat after the manner of fledglings in the nest, eating what was put in my mouth by another.

My Pastor a True "Shepherd"

The morning after that memorable first night I had another visitor, whom I must

mention as one of the cheeriest who came among all those who visited me during the days of hospital life. That was my pastor, a strong, stalwart young minister whom I had met at home a year before, and had come to admire as an ideal preacher and pastor for the times. But now, in the eventful days that set in, I came to do more than admire this preacher of strong build and attractive personality—I learned to love him as a brother man. If ever there was a true pastor, with all of the original Latin force of the "shepherd," he was one. Without a suspicion of the professionalism which mars the work of so many pastors, he came quickly to the help of one of his flock who was in trouble. Without sentimentality or ceremony he proceeded to *do* things for the comfort and relief of that member whose life was imperiled, and his zeal did not run its course after a day or two, but week after week, month after month, he was persistent and untiring in his thoughtful ministrations. This man, my minister, did not always wear a white

tie or wrap himself in a clerical vest, but he did always wear a smile hopeful and sincere, and wrap himself in a mantle of kind words and acts which stamped him more as a follower of the humble Christ than ecclesiastical raiment alone would have done. Sometimes I did have to tell people that the handsome young fellow who had just gone out of my room, and left a pile of magazines or a bag of fruit, was a clergyman, but I never had to inform anyone that he was a friend. This good brother and kindly shepherd of my soul and body did not always read the Scripture or offer prayer to Christ, but he acted the Christ and turned my thoughts Christward more than some who have prayed long and volubly for me. Thank God for the ministry of prayer. Thank God, again, for the ministry of kind deeds! I respect those pastors who can come and affectingly read the story of the good Samaritan at my bedside; I love the one who can come and act the good Samaritan when my body is bruised and aching. And

if I should have to choose one or the other for my model minister, I think I should select the brother, not the cleric—the man who proves himself to be the neighbor, and not the one who descants eloquently on neighborliness, the pastor who showed that his concern did not end with my restored soul, but extended even to my restored body. As I think of this man, who traveled over fifty miles, day after day, just to say a few cheerful words or give me a strengthening handclasp (for there was often time for little more), and offered to get me anything from the last book published to the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, who walked and ran time and again to lift me from bed to my chair, or back again, I somehow search for superlatives. But then I cease straining my vocabulary and just say of him, as some observer once recorded about the Good Shepherd, "He went about doing good."

A Private Room; Surgeon Arrives

Three days I lay straight and motionless,

except when nurse or orderly moved me, before the surgeon could be located up in the Adirondacks and hurry from his gun and the woods to the knife and operating room. I was transferred to a private room and given a special nurse. But I believe I would have gladly foregone any "private" or "special" privileges rather than undergo the pain of being lifted and moved. However, I was not in a position to protest effectually, so when a fat, unkempt, but not unkind orderly stuck his face down close to mine and said, "Put your arm around my neck," I could do nothing but obey. A strong lift, a turn, another wrenching of my back, and I was on the carriage. Then, after a ride down the hall, another transfer, and another sharp dig in the back, I was laid on a high surgical bed, hardened by a board under the mattress, and there and then began life as "No. 7," by which definite but noncommittal term I was known for the remainder of ten weeks.

The surgeon came at last, conferred with his assistant who had taken me in charge

till his arrival, examined me, and went out. I lay in bed and wondered what would be the next thing on the schedule of events. The doctors were speculating outside the door on the slim chances of my living, possibilities of a successful operation, and assuring my friends that there was a chance in a thousand of my getting through all right. But such serious thoughts were far from my simple mind. I had no idea of dying, certainly not without a bigger fight than I had yet put up. Instead of preparing to enter heaven, I, like a simpleton, was planning to enter the university again and complete my theological course in the fall. This was to be my last year, and my best. I didn't want to miss a day or a friend, and it was only a little over a month until matriculation day. As I look back on those fond imaginings I am undecided whether to bless or curse the physicians and nurses who let me go on cherishing such utterly impossible dreams; never giving me the slightest intimation that I was coming into the shadow of the valley of death. Prob-

ably they did well, however, and perhaps, on the theory that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," I was happier and better in my blind ignorance.

The surgeon came in from his consultation and said, in an offhand way, as though he were suggesting fried chicken for lunch: "As you are one of the interested parties, I thought I'd tell you what we decided. We'll send you down this afternoon to have an X-ray picture taken of your spinal column, just to confirm my diagnosis; then, in the morning, we'll make an exploratory incision in your back." That didn't sound half as bad as some hazing ordeals that had been set before me as a scared freshman, so I responded, cheerfully: "All right, Doctor. Very glad you told me. I've been wondering now several days what you were going to do with me."

Accordingly, in the afternoon, I sat, or, rather, "lay," for an X-ray picture. The being "taken" was easy enough; easier, in fact, than having an ordinary photograph taken, for it was not necessary to look

pleasant. The painful part of the performance was being lifted from bed to carriage, carriage to X-ray table, and the reverse, until I was back in bed.

En Route to Oblivion

Then came the morning when the "exploratory incision" was to be made. Despite the surgeon's confident air, I did not just fancy the idea of exploring expeditions in my backbone, where the hair's breadth wavering of the surgeon's lancet would mean a severed cord and instant death. Perhaps I may be pardoned for feeling a bit nervous as I lay waiting for word which meant it was time for me to be loaded once more onto the carriage, and taken to the operating room. After what seemed an interminable length of time the order came; a few handclasps and reassuring words from my friends and I was being wheeled down the hall to—life or death, no man knew which. I can never forget the expression on my good brother's face as it disappeared over the horizon of the

edge of my carriage—the mingled despair and cheerfulness, as he tried to convince me of what he hardly believed himself, that I was going to life and health.

While he pushed me to the etherizing room, the kindly attendant coached me on the proper method of taking ether; the elevator man bade me "Godspeed," and we were there, in the room which was the antechamber to the halls of oblivion, if not death. To feel that in a few minutes you are going to be devoid of all feeling and consciousness is in itself a weird sensation. To realize further, that while you are thus dead to feeling a knife will be probing about in the nerves and muscles of your body, cutting flesh, breaking and removing bone, touching and scraping the spinal cord, the most important single nerve in the body, gives one an emotion that is almost uncanny. In the room were a doctor, who was to administer the anæsthetic, a sweet-faced Sister of Charity, and my beloved pastor. The last thing I remember is his kind, strong features look-

ing down upon me while I breathed in that mysterious gas which was inducing the deep sleep of unconsciousness. So far from disliking or struggling against the anæsthetic, I rather enjoyed it. To me it had not an unpleasant odor, and its effect was really exhilarating. Instead of sinking into unconsciousness, it seemed as though I was being borne aloft to a higher ethereal realm of true existence. I could almost comprehend the sensation of those mystics who have been exalted on the wings of intense religious fervor, or the psalmist taking the "wings of the morning," to behold heavenly glories utterly inconceivable in the mundane sphere. As I was going up, up, up, with a delightful rapidity and lightness, like a disembodied spirit, I sang to myself the Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah, which I had not sung, or thought of, as far as I know, since two years previously, when I sang in the college choir at commencement. Somewhere in that mysterious realms of the sub- or supraliminal consciousness that strain of sacred music,

one of the most exalted the mind or heart of man ever composed, had been lingering. And no more appropriate theme could have been imagined for that supreme moment of exaltation, as my spirit soared to the very gates of heaven, than that great chorus of Handel's masterpiece:

> For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth,
> Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

With that noble strain ringing in my head, darkness, quiet, painlessness settled down upon me.

Whence Doth It Come? and Whither Go?

Many a time since that day I have wondered where "I" was during that two hours succeeding. What became of the *ego*, that individualizing spirit that gave unity to all my life and states of consciousness from birth till that day? Where does the "soul" or "spirit" go in such moments of unconsciousness (or in sleep, for that matter)? Can it die? Can it be dissolved in ether, and re-collected with the return of

sensation and expulsion of ether from the body? Can it be that it returns to the God who gave it? Where is the self when the body is numb and the mind blank? I cannot believe that the *ego* is to be identified with either of these, and comes and goes as thought or sensation does. But if not, where is it—what is it? Together with birth and death, the question of the soul, its nature and abiding place, must remain one of the inscrutable mysteries of life. Perhaps it is to be classed with those questions which puzzled the "teacher in Israel" when He who was "come from God" told him of the second birth, and the Spirit which was like the wind. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

Back on Earth in "No. 7"

When I came to earth again, three hours later, I was back in No. 7. It was very still there, and half-dark. A nurse was fanning me, and every now and then a

doctor entered and felt my pulse. Of the delirious babbling I had uttered, wise and otherwise, the nurse only knows; she would never tell me what I talked about. About the first thing that I recall saying was sensible, or nonsensical, according to the point of view. As I opened my eyes, and saw a nurse of striking beauty sitting at my bedside, and remembered vaguely other nurses who had been beautiful, in face and deeds, to me, I said, "Do you have to pass an examination in good looks to get into this hospital?" I have forgotten her reply, but since she was a woman I believe that she was not displeased; and I, all unconsciously, had made a diplomatic entry into that particular realm where nurses reign supreme over helpless and (sometimes) admiring patients.

Internes and Others Nonplussed

The fight for my life was not over with the operation. Internal complications set in which, though I did not know it at the time, threatened death not very far dis-

tant. According to human observations and conclusions, I could not possibly escape the fatal outcome of those serious complications attending paralysis of vital organs. In fact, the medical students in the hospital used to spend much time demonstrating to my pastor how every law of physiological cause and effect demanded that I die. Then why, in the name of Newton, Kepler, Osler, and all the scientists and physicians, didn't I die? Why am I alive to-day, an apparent defiance and contradiction to every medical rule and precedent which those students had learned? Were the scientific postulates and laws wrong? the students and doctors mistaken in diagnosis and conclusion? No; the laws and observers of the laws were true and accurate as any human knowledge is. But I reverently believe that God, who is the giver and revoker of laws, and so greater than laws, preserved me from death. He did it, not by breaking or contradicting any law, but by employing some higher law, not yet manifest to human

understanding. Laws are but dead things, lifeless formulas of the method of God's working. And is it impossible that God should proceed in some new way, a manner not yet caught and catalogued by human observers? That is all there is to any miracle—the employment of some method or process which is as yet unfamiliar to men, something new, novel, and, maybe, contradictory for finite mind, but neither new nor contradictory to the omniscient, resourceful God. People have sometimes called my recovery "a miracle." Perhaps it is. And I am willing to "stand for" a miracle as long as it is understood that a miracle is not something contradictory to law, or inconsistent with and contrary to reason or highest nature. I cannot believe that at any time, nor for any purpose, whether driving back the waters from the ocean bottom, in giving his people victory in arms, in feeding a hungry saint or healing a sick soul or body, God is inconsistent with himself, or any of his modes of proceeding. God must be forever the same.

The inconsistency, the impossibility, and contradiction at which the man of science holds up protesting hands in horror and skepticism are but distortions of our own feeble, error-bound minds. To the limited knowledge of our grandfathers it would have been absolutely inconceivable, a flat contradiction of all law, that a ton or so of iron, wood, and cloth should skim through the air like a bird; but the aviator to-day knows that his machine flies, not in the face of God's laws, but in harmony with and dependence upon them. Thus when we approach nearer the mind of God, and begin to know as we are known, we may begin to realize that swimming iron, bushes that burn without being consumed, and opening eyes, are no more "miraculous" than sinking iron, fire that consumes, and the eye that remains blind.

The only reason I didn't die, if I may venture my explanation of the unexpected event, is the same as the reason that the son of the widow of Nain didn't die, or Dorcas didn't die, or Lazarus didn't remain

in the tomb until this day: the good Lord heard the prayer of a believing, trustful heart, found the request in Jesus's name, and in accord with his holy will, and granted the petition. I much prefer to stand as an illustration of God's readiness to hear prayer than as an example of a scientific "miracle." I am alive because the "fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man [and woman] availeth much." I know that a heartbroken father and a holy mother prayed in all the anguish of their soul that I might be spared.

A Mother's Prayers

Then not to doctors, though they were skillful, and not to nurses, though they were faithful, do I ascribe my preservation from death, when every indication seemed to make recovery impossible, but to the power of prayer. Because many prayed, and some did not "doubt in their heart, but believed that what they said cometh to pass," God heard and answered the prayers. Preëminent both in praying and believing

was my mother. Always accustomed to spend much of the day and night on her knees, this great crisis added new depth and intensity to her prayer and fresh power to her faith. She never doubted that it would all come out well in God's way and time. On the night just before the operation, I remember, she stood at the window outside my room, and as she turned to go, said: "The sun has burst through a great black cloud. It is a sign for us that our cloud is to be crowned with glory, and that all will be well." One day before I had ever attempted to stand up, and could with difficulty move one leg at all, she said, as we talked about praying for improvement at least, "I never prayed that you should be made able to walk; I prayed, and still do, that you may be able to run, and I expect to see you running before many years." Such faith as that, all along the way, when all signs were discouraging, reminds one of Jesus's exclamation over a woman who came and expected him to answer a certain petition, "O woman, great is

thy faith." When it comes to deep, unfailing, effectual faith, that believes "where we cannot prove," we men must yield first place to our wives and mothers. A man must have some foothold in the way of reason or proof; a woman needs only God for her great need. Not only to God, but to a man whom she loves, will a woman pin her faith, though he be sunk so low that everyone under heaven has lost confidence in him. A woman's faith in his purity or honesty has reclaimed many a sinner who has sunk almost past hope. That unshakable faith of woman in God and man inspired Kipling's eloquent tribute to mothers:

If I were drowned in the deepest sea;
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine;
I know whose tears would come down to me;
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine.

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine;
I know whose love would come up to me still;
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine.

If I were damned both body and soul,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine;
I know whose prayers would make all whole;
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine.

Let me echo, with all the conviction of a reclaimed body and soul, that I know whose prayers have made me whole—my mother's.

A Loyal Sweetheart

There is one other love which is fit to stand beside the love of my mother, that is, the faithful love of a blue-eyed girl who had promised only three months before my accident that she would some day share my humble parsonage and my fortunes, "for better or for worse." I am not speaking with lover's license or with rose-colored hyperbole when I say that this girl was the most beautiful I have ever seen. Possessed of a striking beauty such as artists rave over, and an artless charm of manner such as marks only the pure in heart, she would have graced any palace. Why one who could have had brilliant conquests in the

realm of hearts had sweetly yielded to the love of a poor theological student and consented to become the mistress of a parsonage is one of Cupid's mysteries. The delightful mystery of her love I have ceased to pry into and simply accept as one of those clear gifts which God sometimes bestows on undeserving men. But in the few months that we have lived and labored together I have found that a deep, consuming desire to minister to others and a genuine joy in making others happy constituted the leading motive which prompted her to accept that title opprobrious to anyone with a taint of pride or selfishness in their character, "the minister's wife." But that she was inspired by love of a minister, as well as love of ministering, was abundantly shown by the faithfulness of my betrothed during that bitter experience which began with the fall of the derrick upon my back.

Though she was many miles away at the time of the accident, she started as soon as she heard that I was asking for her, and by

traveling all night reached my side only two days after I was brought to the hospital. The atmosphere of No. 7 brightened as with a sunrise when she turned into the door of my room. Her heart was aching with sympathy and her mind distracted with dreadful uncertainty, but her face was cheerful and her manner calm. I never saw her weep. She saved her tears for the loneliness of her room and made her visits to mine a tonic better than medicine. In the hour of crisis, when death seemed imminent, her love came to me like the strong, calm assurance of heaven; when lifelong invalidism confronted the boy whom she had consented to marry at a time that he had a body and mind equal to a man's work, her love never faltered; true as God, calm, sweet, patient, and inspiring, her affection knew no variableness or shadow of turning. My mind turns instinctively toward that love which is "broader than the measure of man's mind" when I think of her devotion and faith in me at an hour when any feeling touched with human selfishness would

have lost hold, despairing. Loving steadily in the face of death, believing implicitly with scanty grounds of hope, proudly walking by my wheel chair, accompanying me on my awkward expeditions on canes, happy over every little improvement, sympathetic at every setback, sharing every vicissitude of my fortunes as her own, she is forever enshrined in my heart as the living embodiment of that which Shakespeare celebrated in his sonnet on love:

Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.
Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bended sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

I would not essay to recount, day by day, the ten weeks of hospital life. First, because this is not a diary; second, because the days were so similar that the account could be written by ditto marks after the first day—and ditto marks are not interesting reading. There are, ordinarily, only two events by which the hospital patient's day is divided, and from which moments are reckoned. These events are not the "getting up" and "going to bed" of ordinary existence, but the arrival of the "day nurse" (7 A. M.) and the "night nurse" (7 P. M.). Many times the change of nurse and the gas light is the only variation between day and night for the sleepless form on the cot. Pain and difficulty of getting prompt medical attention at night really made the night more dreadful and less restful than day for me. The lines in Longfellow's "The Day Is Done,"

> And the night shall be filled with music,
> And the cares that infest the day,
> Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
> And as silently steal away,

used to seem like bitter irony when I lay in bed all night, the only "music" being the groans of those in pain, and the crying of children that was borne up from the children's ward.

Of course when natural sleep is impossible it must be induced by use of the hypodermic injection; sleep, to "knit up the raveled sleave of care," must be secured at all hazards; and so, every night, my arm was punctured by a needle and some opiate was sent coursing through my blood. Then quietly, slowly, a feeling of drowsiness would creep upon me, like a great, delightful tide, rising higher and higher, until the languor of a restless sleep finally came—all too often to be broken by pains too severe to be deadened by the medicine. But in those fifty or more nights of induced stupor I began to appreciate the insidious delight which holds the opium and morphine fiend in grip of a deadly habit. By the end of those "hospital nights" there was not a spot on either arm which had not been pierced

with the "hypo" needle; and I had learned to appreciate the healing power and the ineffable joy of genuine, deep sleep.

It was during these days as "No. 7" that I cultivated acquaintance with, and admiration for, a class of people whom I had never come in contact with before. I mean the American nurse, both trained and in training. For the most part, during the two years of invalidism, I was attended by the nurses in blue and white, or "in training." And during those months, when they have been for me hands and feet, I have come to respect, and almost revere them. As a whole, I know of no more gentle, courteous, and conscientious class of young women than those who can be found wearing the white caps in hospitals, sanitariums, and asylums of this country. Cheerful under conditions that would tax the patience of a saint, faithful in her work even when unappreciated, kind, though no thanks (and sometimes only imprecations) be given her, the average nurse stands as a living monument to the sweet-

souled Florence Nightingale, and strongly reminding one of the spirit of Him who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." If there were any poetic gift within me, I should find noble subject for my verses, not among the laureled heroes of war or the forum, but among the quiet, sympathetic women who are saving thousands of lives every year by untiring and often unpleasant work, loyal through hardship and adversity to the high ideals which they have set before themselves. And if I were a Carnegie, determined to die poor by making others rich, I should found an endowment to pension those sweet "sisters of the tender touch" who have given the strength of their lives to make others strong, and are, after less than twelve years of unselfish labor, generally either worn out entirely or "shelved" as being unfit for their very exacting work of love. It is true that very often the nurse, with her sympathetic and independent spirit properly blended, has won the affection of some man, often a patient, who is anxious to

provide for all her future desires and make her independent of pension funds, and she retires with a MRS. degree. But for those who, for any reason, do not change from station of nurse to wife, there should be some practical way of expressing humanity's great debt, and relieving them from all worry and anxiety in declining years.

Where a "Sower" May "Go Forth to Sow" with Expectation

What a vast opportunity for either good or bad lies in the grasp of those who minister to the sick, only those realize who have lain helpless and watched the sun come out with the nurse's smile, or the darkness envelop the room with her frown. If it is true that there is no time when a man is so irritable and disagreeable as when he is sick in bed, it is also true that there is no time when one is so impressionable and open to influences of kindness or harshness. It is when a man is unable to go and get a drink of water that he appreciates the Christliness of her who gives it

to him, and understands why Christ said it was done unto him. I have lain in the influence of sweet relief from pain and racked my mind for some practical way of expressing my gratitude, some way within my means, of showing how thankful I was to a hospital attendant who was only doing his routine duty in answering my bell, and attending to my wants. One of those "orderlies" whom I recall was rough in appearance and only ordinarily prompt and willing to help me, and yet I have heard his footstep outside my door with more delight than I would have found in the rustle of angels' wings. And the sight of his homely face, with a good-natured smile, has brought me more seraphic bliss than a glimpse of heaven opened. Why? Because I was in that condition when any kindness made a never-to-be-forgotten effect, and stirred up gratitude entirely incommensurate with the favor done. Then, on the other hand, some of the hardest thoughts that I have ever harbored against anybody I have felt toward those physicians and

attendants who seemed rough and unfeeling when they were asked to do something to relieve the pain which I suffered.

Because I have felt these varying moods possess my whole soul, as the disposition and manner of nurses and attendants changed, and have seen other sufferers experience the same attraction and repulsion, I say that the nurse holds a tremendous responsibility for making the thoughts of patients good or bad, holy or hateful. And who could forecast the harvest that springs from little seeds of mercy, sympathy, and gentleness intrusted to the fallow soil of an afflicted heart? There are rich harvests in store for anyone who ministers to the sick, tactfully and faithfully, which the minister or evangelist could never hope to reap.

The Sisters of Charity

One morning as I opened my eyes, half-dazed, there fell upon my ears the dull monotone of many voices rising and falling in rhythm, almost like chanting. Yet it

was not music, but a repetition of words, sentences, now hushed for a moment, as though one quiet voice were reading alone, now raised again in chorus of many voices. As I was just coming out of a restless sleep, the strange sounds produced a queer sensation, half-lulling, half-alarming. Who—what, could it be thus early? Before the sun was up, here, apparently, was a large number of people saying together some words which to me were indistinguishable, yet which seemed to mean a great deal to those who spoke them.

When the rest of the world woke up, and I was thoroughly wakened myself, I inquired about the noise that I had heard or dreamed of hearing. The nurse assured me that I had not dreamed it, that the sounds had come from the Sisters at prayer.

As I have mentioned, I had been brought, without knowing anything of it, to a Catholic hospital, managed by Sisters of Charity. Every detail of superintendence, from provision of food and medicine to training of nurses, was in charge of well-educated

Sisters. Their piety and efficiency made a great impression upon me, and especially do I take off my Protestant hat to their deep reverence and regularity at prayer. Every morning, long before night nurses thought of going off duty, these devout women were gathered in the chapel (next to my room) upon their knees in prayer and meditation. Then, at frequent intervals during the day, they met and went through their unique order of service; and late at night their peaceful voices lulled me to sleep. It seemed to me that they, as nearly as any people I ever knew, kept literally the Master's injunction, "Pray without ceasing."

What though they did wear a garb strange to our Protestant eyes? So did Wesley. What though they bowed before the crucifix by the light of candles? Their minds and eyes, fixed on the Crucified One, were not distracted by the thoughts of clothes and society which absorb so large a share of our women's thoughts during Protestant service. Their

hearts were in as truly worshipful state, and humbly devout, as any body of Protestant churchgoers, and in frequency and regularity of devotions the Sisters far excelled any "reformed" congregation. Without justifying any of the mistakes of Catholic theology (which, in sincere belief of many of them, cannot be called sin) I have always felt like bowing in respect and unworthiness before the strong sense of religious duty which kept the Sisters, and many earnest Catholics, so continually in the attitude and spirit of prayer. The difficulty attendant upon getting a handful of church members to unite in a service of prayer one hour a week, at a convenient hour, in a comfortable church, may be responsible for some of my admiration for those who, day after day, summer and winter, were gathered together, without break in their ranks, for prayer and religious meditation. I was made happy too one day when "Sister Mary" told me that I had been included in their petitions.

Hopes of Elevation to a Chair

One day the doctor said, "We'll have to see about setting him up in a chair." If he had proposed my occupying the royal throne of Great Britain he would have made me no more happy or eager with anticipation. I thereupon had visions of being lifted gracefully into a comfortable rocker and sitting there by the window in luxurious ease for hours at a time. But no chair was forthcoming. No one even seemed to be making preparations for the great event. Great event, indeed, it would be for me, after lying flat six weeks, with weights tied onto my legs as though I would fly upward if not held down to this mundane sphere. Great event indeed, after having been fed by a nurse without ever catching a glimpse of what was in the dishes on the tray at the bedside till the food dangled from a fork just above my mouth; to sit up, and then look down on the tray and see what was coming without being told, or waiting to "taste and see." Just to see the floor would be quite an

event. My bed was so high that all of the lower part of the room was an unexplored country to me; and who could tell, when I was able to get a bird's-eye view of things, what mysteries might be explained and what revelations burst forth! Then, too, if I could get into a chair by yonder window, I might discover what was below that board walk on the hill which I could see from my bed. Perhaps I could then look down upon the pavements on which, every little while, the horses clattered as they brought in the ambulance with "one more unfortunate."

But all these glorious possibilities did not appear to stir anyone to get the chair and put me in it. Inexcusable delay, it seemed to me; cruel withholding of pleasure from one who did not demand much to be satisfied. Day after day slipped by, and my horizon was still the top of the tray, bureau, and the board walk on the hill outside. When at last I demanded a reason for thus "keeping a good man down," the doctor said they would have to go at it

gradually, setting me up in bed first, then elevating me more and more until I could stand it—or sit it—in a chair. That it took some strength and suppleness of joints to sit up was a consideration that I had overlooked in my dreaming, but which I discovered promptly on the nurse's first attempt to raise me to a sitting posture. The first little inclination upward shot a pain through my rusted thigh joints which dimmed my visions of backyards or bird's-eye views. I was only too happy to sink back into the horizontal position. But now nurses and "orderlies" seemed unduly anxious to get me to sitting erect and into a chair. With fiendish persistence each day they would insist on raising me a little, a little more, and leaving me for a longer period each time in the inclined position, to enjoy my new views. But, aching in every joint that had to bend, I had no pleasure in new points of view. The thing that most occupied my attention was getting back to a comfortable plane, and dwelling on the impossibility of ever bend-

ing enough to sit in a chair. As the dormant muscles were strained into life, and the stiffened joints moaned in response to their tug, I lost all desire to advance from Plane into Solid Geometry.

To make things easier (!), and facilitate my sitting in a chair, the nurse began bending my knees a little each day. For a month they had had the luxury of absolute idleness, and naturally objected strenuously to being disturbed and compelled to unbend from their stolid dignity. Though she began carefully, the unaccustomed motion made the joints creak and groan like a rusty hinge (figuratively), and made me cry out in desperate protest (literally). Unheeding, merciless, she kept on bending those joints every day. Pleading, argument, threats, everything was unavailing to stop her procedure. "Doctor's orders" was the only satisfaction I could get when I had finished my case and eloquently summed up the strong points *contra id faciendum.* Although I had previously ascribed to my nurse a fair degree of sympathy and intel-

ligence, I questioned her having a heart or brain at all during those processes of torture when she stood at the foot of my bed bending my knee joints, often smiling at my discomfiture in fiendish (it appeared) glee. I used to reach out my arms, about the only things I could move, for inkwell, paper weights, or anything that might be on my tray, but the tormentor had prudently removed out of my reach everything that might be employed as a weapon. Working thus gingerly, it was weeks before I could sit up straight in bed, and longer still before I could be lifted to a wheel chair.

But the great day finally came, when I was swung by two attendants to the chair and pushed out by my nurse into the hall. Notwithstanding there were some discomforts, it was an exhilarating experience. Just to get outside the door of "No. 7," and look up and down the hall; just to be rolled to a window and see houses, trees, chimneys, and, 'way off, people hurrying to and fro—why, it was like being "born again" in a true and delightful physical

sense. I felt somewhat like the man who had just had his eyes opened, I think, and "saw men as trees walking"—a little dazed by it all, but happy. I knew the exaltation a butterfly feels, if it feels at all, when it bursts out of its old dingy cocoon into the sunlight of heaven. O how bright the world was that day! How the sun glistened on the houses, and how green the grass and beautiful the trees! Heaven cannot appear much more radiant to the soul which has reached its beautiful home than the earth did to me when I first looked upon it from a wheel chair. What if I couldn't move either leg, or sit up more than an hour without pain? I was alive, the world with its beauty lay before me, friends were near, and God was good.

Notes of Such Experience in David

Some such joy and light must surge through the soul which has been bruised and sick, and then been raised by God into newness of life. The writings of the psalmist, who had tasted many deep sor-

rows and drunk the cup of bitter woe, respond more than any human writings to the feelings of a man who has felt his feet slipping, and has thrown out his hands to have them clasped in the warm hand of the Strong Deliverer. The book of Psalms becomes a new book, almost a book of personal memoirs and feelings he would like to have written if he could, to the man who has been in the depths of moral or physical despair. One can hardly burst forth in hymns of praise like David until he has known the "pains of hell gat hold upon him," and "found trouble and sorrow." Then, and not till then, can he sing triumphantly and sincerely, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." On the day that I was first able to sit in a chair, after the "cords of death" had so completely "compassed me," that psalm one hundred and sixteen seemed written for me, and every specification adapted to

my case. Though I was still some way from being able to "*walk* before the Lord in the land of the living," I knew God, who had raised me as far as a chair, would also complete the work and let me "walk" too in the land of the living. As for what I should "render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me," I had, and still have, no surer determination than to "take the cup of salvation and call upon the Lord, and pay my vows unto the Lord, yea, in the presence of all his people."

"Raised with Christ" Means New Joy and Vision Too

And interpreted in the spiritual realm, there is such an irrepressible burst of enthusiasm which comes to the man who has heard Jesus say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee . . .; arise, and take up thy bed, and walk." A similar newness of life, a strange inflowing of new power, a broadening of his horizon, and a transformation of common objects and people, follow that experience of being "raised together with him." A man's eyes are really "holden"

until the touch of Christ has been laid upon them. He sees meanness in people, cheapness in things, monotony in duty, and vanity in all things until the Lord has raised him up (perhaps at expense of great pain and agony to him) to where the glow of heaven can be seen. Then "earth's crammed with heaven and every common bush aflame with God."

And the only way God can open some blind eyes, and raise up some atrophied spirits, is by the severest discipline. He has to cut away the scales which blind us (no painless operation, often), or he has to shape and bend us painfully, that we may finally reach the posture in which we can see and adore him. Many a time, after I was able to be wheeled to the window fronting the city, I have looked with envy upon the throngs of men and women hurrying back and forth in the streets below, jostling one another as they walked or ran. How many of that great crowd, I wondered, ever thanked God for two legs to walk on? How many ever gave a mo-

ment's thought to the intricate system of muscle and nerve which, in the wonderful providence of God, works so smoothly as to let them go along, erect and easy, upon their limbs? Hardly an individual. And if he does occasionally entertain a grateful thought, it is probable that he has had a twinge of rheumatism, or a cut, or sprain to remind him that the mechanism of walking is not absolutely pain- or accident-proof. Not until he has lost the free use of some part of his body, "been afflicted," as we say, does the man think of God who gave it to him, and keeps it running smoothly. Had the psalmist never gotten lost himself, or felt hunger and thirst of body, he might never have voiced such beautiful gratitude as he did in the Shepherd Psalm, which all the world has learned to say after him: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

CHAPTER III

Lessons Learned in a Sanitarium

After some five months of living half the time in bed, half in a wheel chair, I was able to sit, with tolerable comfort, on a pneumatic cushion for five hours at a stretch, though even then the last fifteen minutes were generally spent wriggling like a small boy who has just been spanked, or wishing that I could sit on my shoulder blades or my head for a little while. Then, although I had never attempted standing, I was considered well enough to go to a sanitarium. A sanitarium differs from a hospital in this respect: you go to a sanitarium when you contemplate getting better; you go to a hospital when you contemplate getting worse.

Concerning Sanitaria

Two classes of people patronize the sanitaria of this country: those who have been living at too fast a pace and had to slow

down, and those who have been living at a very slow rate and are determined to quicken the pace. A sanitarium is sometimes known and used as a hospital, sometimes as a watering place, sometimes as a summer or winter resort, and sometimes as an old ladies' home. As I have taken frightened glimpses into the luxurious parlors of the one at which I stayed, I have regarded the last name as one most appropriate. Women, when I first arrived, were scattered everywhere—sofas, chairs, piano, all were covered with them: some with sewing, some with knitting, some with raffia baskets, but all with tongues. After hurried glances at these chattering groups I always, during the first few weeks of my stay, longed for a sixty-horse-power motor on the rear of my chair to drive me to a place of safety without respect for speed laws. Later on, it is true, I became more accustomed to the sights and sounds and dared to approach quite near the feminine groups for three or four minutes at a time.

The place whither I went was a sani*tar*ium, not a sani*tor*ium. There is a difference of more than one letter. There is a difference of about twenty dollars a week on the side of the "*O*rium." If one has a little ailment and much money, he becomes a "guest" at some sanitorium. If he has much ailment and a little money, he becomes a patient in a sanitarium. Still, at my sanitarium there were quite a number wealthy enough to be "guests," some of us poor enough to be "patients," and a few appeared to be badly enough off to be called "inmates." It was a fairly cosmopolitan group, take us all in all, that used the "House" stationery. Among the three hundred registered guests there was represented almost every class of people: some of the "upper crust"—society folk who had been compelled to lessen the pace after a winter whirl of social functions; merchants, wearied in their ceaseless pursuit of the almighty, elusive dollar; authors and artists, fagged in brain after their last great contribution to the world's intellect or

æsthetics; old ladies, rich and wrinkled, with nothing to do but be waited on; poor old preachers (one or two poor but not old) and missionaries, broken down with the nervous strain of years of preaching and ministering to others. These and many other types were there—men of distinction and men of extinction; men whose names are in newspapers and histories, and some whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. Probably, in this sanitarium there were fewer who figure in Who's Who in America than those who might be found in "Who's Who in the Kingdom of Heaven," since the "House" made a specialty of and discount to three deserving classes of people. It was one of the blessed institutions founded in this Christian land not designed primarily to make money. Not that it was not run on a business basis, or that it labeled its ministration to deserving people as "charity." But its prime object was not to fatten the purses of some stockholders, but, rather, to benefit suffering men and women, letting

them pay enough to keep the service up to a first-class standard. In pursuance of this policy generous discounts were given to three classes of people, who are generally admitted to be the worst paid and hardest worked (humanly speaking) of all educated workers, namely, missionaries, ministers, and public school teachers. Here, in quiet, clean atmosphere, and by well-adapted treatments, the missionary on his well-earned furlough could recuperate the drained reservoirs of physical strength and spiritual vitality. Here the preacher, worn out in brain and nerve, trying to meet the unnumbered demands of church and society, could revitalize his body, his soul, and his message; could refresh his mind and through communion with the Eternal Source equip himself anew for his task. Here the school teacher, weak and nervous from the strain of instruction and discipline, could relax, rebuild, and then return to her boys and girls with new enthusiasm and determination to mold right characters and minds as far as lay in her power.

"Chair-man's" Life Increases in Pace

It was here at the sanitarium, with such various companions, that life in the wheel chair took on new interest and speed. In the little world of our own I acquired quite a reputation as manipulator of a wheel chair. Arms and shoulders being strong and unimpaired, I could propel myself in the chair by means of the wheels very easily. On the level I could make faster progress than most people by walking, or even running. In floors, park, and elevators my chair acquired a reputation for speed and accuracy. It was labeled the "Lightning Express," "Black Diamond," and such expressive names. Often people, watching me dart around, twist and turn in it, would take me aside privately and express anxiety about my going so fast. The plea was usually on the ground of my safety, but I half-suspected that my well-wishers were really more afraid of being run down by me than they were worried about my danger. So, though I occupied the "chair," I fear I was not recognized as a

professor, and I had too much fun in it to be regarded as even a serious thinker. But, though I disregarded speed laws and had a happy time, I did see many things and folks by the way, which have been the basis for these reflections, given me a little different standpoint (or sit-point) for commenting on affairs generally, and make these words literally opinions *ex cathedra.*

Why God Takes "No Delight" in the Legs of a Man

During the months that my legs hung like useless appendages over the edge of my chair new meaning has flashed upon the exclamation of the psalmist, "He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man" (Psa. 147. 10). Did the psalmist mean that man's legs are an exception to God's judgment pronounced upon creation when he said it was all "very good"? No. It simply means that the Lord, with his truer wisdom, finds his delight in those things that endure, and are really of permanent and spiritual value. The character, the motives, the heart—those things which are

unseen but eternal—are the things which God notices and rejoices in. He looks with the same approval upon a man with one leg, one and a half legs, or no legs. Those things are mere incidentals in his estimating the worth of a human being. The psalmist hastens on to tell us, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

It may be, then, to correct our mistaken scale of judgment that he takes away an arm, a leg, or an eye. While *he* takes no pleasure in the legs of a man, too often the man does. Not only so, but the man gets the opinion that they are essential to his happiness, and indispensable to his work in the world. He comes to think that without them, and the hurry and bustle they enable him to make, he could not efficiently serve either God or man. Even when engaged in God's work, he has become accustomed to use arms, legs, and mouth frantically to further God's kingdom, forgetting that the kingdom of heaven comes not by running to and fro,

nor by saying, "Lo, here; lo, there!" but that in quietness and returning his strength shall be. And when he is deprived of the physical power to run continually to assist the Lord in ushering in his kingdom he finds that there is, after all, more progress made by waiting on God in prayer and humble submission than in the most strenuous and well-meant human striving. And then he discovers, as a matter of fact, that God can and does choose the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty, and that a man without legs can run upon the Lord's errands if his heart is quietly waiting and willing to be used. Of more men than Noah has it been true that "the Lord shut him in" before he began to realize the omnipotence of God and understand the plan by which spiritual forces operate. David was so homely and unpromising a youth that his kinsfolk scorned him as a candidate for king, but God wanted him to rule. Moses was the man who couldn't talk, but by yielding his will to God's, Moses delivered and left

some of the most eloquent passages in the Scriptures, known to Bible students to-day as the "addresses of Moses." Is this lesson clear, then, that God withholds talent or strength (humanly judged), or takes away what he has given (as he depleted Gideon's band), in order that man may find that in Jehovah alone is his strength?

Latent Sympathy in Human Hearts

One of the most delightful revelations that life in a wheel chair has brought me is the amount of latent and unsuspected kindness that lurks in the average human breast. The man on the street has hidden in him fifty per cent more of sympathy and kindness than he gets credit for, but he has it covered with a coat of reserve and stoicism which needs to be melted. And the sun which will melt that icy coat of seeming indifference and sternness is the sight of some one more unfortunate than he is. Time and again have I been delightfully surprised at the tenderness revealed in hearts that I supposed were utter

strangers to the softer emotions. Rough men on the street, whom I had never seen before, would stop to inquire about my trouble, or offer a word of cheer. I shall never forget one laborer who saw me, and said with awkward sincerity, "I wish you was as strong as I am." Another sought to establish some common ground of sympathy by saying, "I have a brother who is a cripple." One of the sweetest and most unexpected assurances that I received during my hospital life was the promise of an "orderly," ill-mannered and of coarse exterior, who was, one would think, hopelessly hardened to such scenes of distress. This man gave me unbounded cheer by saying, the night before I was going on the operating table, "I'll put up a little prayer for you."

These incidents I could match with others from almost every day of my life on wheels and in bed—incidents which betray in the most unpromising characters a soft heart and tender feeling for one in deep affliction. It is a wholesome tonic for

one who is inclined to take a pessimistic view of human nature to behold how one touch of hardship makes brothers of us all, and how often gruff manners conceal a warm heart. Did not the unconquerable optimism and leadership of Christ rest in just this ability to see in everyone the one spot of tenderness—this clear jewel hidden in the ore—appeal to it, develop it, until the whole nature was transformed and made pure and good?

"Rest in the Lord"

One of the humiliating things about wheel-chair life is the absolute dependence on others which it forces upon one. It makes one keenly appreciate the old-age embarrassments which Jesus foretold for Peter, "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." It took some time for me to resign myself to being lifted, turned, and borne this way and that, not at my volition, but by the strength and will of

another. For months there was a lurking fear of being dropped when anyone would pick me up to put me in the chair. So distrustful and fearful was I that, rather than let one in whom I had no confidence lift me, I would lie all day where I was. Gradually I learned, however, that my fears were imaginary. He who lifted me was always strong enough, and really more concerned about doing it right than I was. My fear and apprehension only made it all the more hard and dangerous a process. Yielding passively made the lifting process easier and safer. Then, too, in going on a journey, I used to consume hours worrying about how I was going to get on and off the car, fretting over a thousand and one things that had to be accomplished. But, invariably, when I came to the time and place which I had dreaded, the difficulty was vanished, "the stone was rolled away." Ready and willing hands were always found to help over the rough places, the chair was always in place, every incident had been foreseen and provided for by thoughtful

friends, and would have been without my worry. In short, the worst troubles I had were those which never happened.

In wheel-chair experiences absolute submission and reliance on another smooths away the difficulty and makes life twice as enjoyable. But the same rule will apply as forcibly in any sort of life. On legs too Hill Difficulty is always made level by confidence; fretting always makes it steeper. The psalmist had been in some hard places himself when he wrote the words which this age needs more than any people that ever lived: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; . . . and he shall bring it to pass." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

Classes of "Chair-men"

While sitting and rolling in my wheel chair at the sanitarium, sometimes alone, sometimes with other "chair-men," I formulated the principle that everyone who rides in a wheel chair is not unable to walk. I have distinguished at least four different kinds of wheel-chair people, as they are

found at sanitaria and watering places. First, there are those who take to the chair for the same reason that a woman takes to uncomfortable skirts and high-heeled shoes—it is fashionable and provides a conspicuous way of spending money. These people are so far slaves of Dame Fashion that when staying in places where many of the "first" people lie about in chairs, they straightway secure one for themselves, and engage a jaunty nurse or attendant to wheel it. They thus proclaim the fact that they are "in style" and have the money to do the proper thing in a thorough manner. Then there is another class of people who are sitting in the wheel chair from sheer laziness. Whether it be a disease attributable to hookworm, hereditary or acquired, laziness impels some to recline upon the soft pillows of a wheel chair simply because they do not care to make the exertion to walk. It is easier to be pushed than to stand up and walk, so they are pushed. Another group of people will be found in wheel chairs because they

desire to, or have been ordered to, rest. They are saving their strength, conserving their energy, lest later they have to join those who ride in wheel chairs because they are helpless. These people are wise because, while there is yet time, they protect themselves against utter breakdown, as the prudent ship captain lays in a large stock of food and water while he is in a port where they are obtainable. Again, you will find a last class of people who are in chairs, not because they are lame, or helpless in limbs, but because they are mentally crippled and weak. Their legs are not broken, but their resolution is; they *think* they cannot walk, and so perforce they must ride. They may be perfectly sincere in believing themselves helpless, and for all practical purposes they are as helpless as though their legs were clean cut off. In fact, the person who is lame in his mind, as a matter of imagination, is a little more pitiable than the one who is lame in body as a matter of fact. No disease is so deplorable or so hard to cure as a disease of the mind.

"The Law of Compensation"

Another lesson that has been brought home during these months of chair-riding is what is known in technical language as the "law of compensation." This does not mean, as Pat explained to Mike, "Thet if wan leg is longer than the ither, the ither is shoarter than that wan." It does mean, simply, God's gracious provision for balancing or evening up things. While my legs were hanging limp and lifeless over the edge of a wheel chair, getting daily thinner, my arms and shoulders were growing stronger through the unaccustomed labor of propelling the chair by its wheels. By no system of exercise, in health, would I have developed such strong shoulders and arms. Which fact is a testimony to the kind justice of God. If he takes from us in one thing, he makes it up in another. The blind man lives in a world of sounds which we who see know nothing about; his fingers explore regions and learn things that we never dream of. Many who are deprived of hands have an agility with toes which is

marvelous. When the Lord roots out in one place he plants in another. If a forest rots and is buried underground, lo, he has transformed it into coal so precious that men tunnel the earth for it. And so, though it may not be instantly apparent, those whom the Lord has touched with infirmity he has also touched with blessing in some other respect. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Steep Places and Their Lesson

On floors and level sidewalks I used to sail along in my chair very nicely, supplying my own motor power. But just as I began to feel proudly independent the wheel would strike an incline, and I would look anxiously about for a "pusher." 'Tis so in the ride through life. On the level, smooth place we think we can get along very nicely with any god. With our bodies strong, minds keen, and the weather fair,

we make mock at those who crave the protection and good will of a superhuman Being. Only yesterday a young man of clear mind and bright promise assured me confidentially that he was going to get on without God, Bible, or church. Very well, in the vigor of youth, the clear skies of inexperience, confident one! But when the blasts of life hit you, and the billows roar, you will look about for a wiser Captain, a Pilot who knows the waters, to take the helm of your life. "*De profundis*" you may be compelled to cry to God. The life, more especially the death, of boastful infidels like Tom Paine, for example, is proof positive that it is impossible to get through and beyond this life with its change and decay without being forced to our knees to cry unto Him who is a "very present help in time of trouble," and who, alone, has "the keys of death and Hades."

When There is Peril in Numbers

It is safer to have one person push a wheel chair than two. Sometimes I have

been actually embarrassed (not to say endangered) by the number and willingness of my friends to "push." Two or more of them would seize the back of my chair and start down the street to give me a "pleasant little ride." Then the way that I went was neither narrow nor straight. With two sets of arms, directed by two independent minds, furnishing my power, I was now on the verge of going off one side of the walk, then threatened by a telegraph pole on the other. The coöperative motor company at the back spent most of their time disputing as to who was to blame for the gyrations. Meanwhile I knew that neither was at fault, but that the combination was the cause of my deviations. Inwardly I wished one or the other would be the headlight, or the "smell," instead of both trying to be the driving-rod.

Similar disaster overtakes one when he surrenders himself in life to two different propelling forces. The attempt to have more than one aim, one ideal, one master always means a crooked and disastrous

way. An ox and a Shetland pony do not pull together harmoniously; one would make better progress walking than driving such a team. God and Satan cannot work together in the arrangements of any man. The one who gives himself up to Jesus cannot allow pride, earthly honor, or selfishness to have any directing or controlling part in his life.

True, it is often more sociable to have several friends pushing your chair, but it is not safer. It is more sociable to "talk to the motorman," but it endangers life. Better sacrifice a little sociability of that kind. If we could mingle God and mammon, purity and pleasure, self-denial and greed, we think our life would be more enjoyable along the way. Perhaps; but there would come, sooner or later, an unexpected turn, a jolt, and an upsetting to our pleasurable arrangements.

It begins to appear why the Lord said "therefore" after "Ye cannot serve God and mammon. *Therefore* I say unto you, Take no thought for your life," etc. The

logical connection is, if we have one reliable Master, he will guard and guide us safely; we need not fret; but if we are trying to vacillate between two, now yielding to one, now to another, we may well look out for ourselves, for between both disaster will surely overtake us.

The Hardest Work in the World

From many months of enforced idleness I am convinced that the hardest thing in the world to do is to do nothing. The labors of Hercules are play compared with endless loafing. When we are tiring ourselves out in the daily grind of work, we often long for the chance to just sit back and do nothing forever. But, be sure, a man soon wearies of idleness, and comes to the conclusion that uninterrupted resting is the most irksome job. He is very soon ready to exchange idling like a drone for working like a dog. How many times, as I have lain on soft pillows of bed or chair, watching men come home from the shops, grimy with dirt, weary with toil, have I

coveted the joy of working to exhaustion! O, the luxury of being tired! After lying for about two months unable to make an exertion, a man knows no physical joy equal to that of exhaustion which comes from honest toil.

Therefore I have come to distrust those descriptions of heaven which make it a place of continuous, absolute, and eternal rest. Why, I believe that heaven itself would become a bore if there were nothing for the saints to do—no work of any sort to occupy their minds and hands. Deliver me from a heaven which is nothing but "flowery beds of ease." The experiences of life, the talents and training of time will certainly find fit employ in eternity. It may be only running (or flying) on errands for the King, polishing up the precious stones in the city wall, or, maybe, tending one of the twelve gates; but, however lowly, I hope there will be some place where I can work until I am tired, and can lie down to sweet, well-earned rest, under the skies of the New Jerusalem.

Where "Orders is Orders"

One thing which impresses every patient in a hospital, or "guest" in a sanitarium, is the undeviating obedience with which a doctor's orders are carried out. The law of the Medes and Persians is an antiquated blue law compared to the order of a doctor once written down on the "order book" in the nurse's office. For days I never saw the doctor at all; when I did it was for a brief ten minutes in the morning; but I got the effect of the doctor, through his imperial mandates, every day from morning till night. He was really the original cause of about everything that happened to me, though he never saw it done, nor ever seemed to be much disturbed about its being done. It used to suggest to me a man winding up his watch in the morning, and then going about, turning his attention to a thousand other things, confident that the innumerable little springs, screws, and wheels would, with the initial impulse which he gave them, work on harmoniously and quietly, and so accurately that whenever he

wanted to know the hour, a glance at the face of his faithful mechanism would tell him. Almost so responsive and reliable was the operation of attendants when the hand of a wise physician had given the right start.

Of course, in order that all things and people, from the head nurse to the scrub-woman, should work together like clock-work to a beneficial end, the fundamental law among medical workers is obedience. The first lesson, and the last, that a nurse has to master is obedience—slavish, literal, invariable obedience; and to me it has sometimes seemed wooden-headed, automatic obedience, without any more intelligence than a cogwheel possesses when it obeys the law of resistance. Such stupid servility and dogged adherence to the order of some unseen doctor used to disgust me thoroughly, especially when the obedience meant treatment which disturbed my temporary comfort.

For example: I tossed in pain all one night simply because my nurse obeyed what she firmly believed was a doctor's

order. I had been given a hypodermic injection every night till I could get no rest without a drug thus administered. But the doctor had intimated to somebody that I could get on without one; that had been interpreted as an order; to my special nurse it came as an order, and so, the getting of a "hypo" that night was an impossibility. All night I begged and pleaded for an opiate. But no. Orders were to the contrary; I was to sleep without one or stay awake. For me the only alternative was to stay awake. Wakefulness meant suffering. My sympathetic nurse sought out the Sister in charge. She had recourse to pills and powders. Everything was done that could be thought of to induce sleep *except* breaking that order. Everyone knew that wakefulness was harmful, that sleep, even induced, was necessary. Common sense dictated but one course, but since orders were to the contrary, common sense was disregarded, and I slept not a wink. So I lay with unpleasant feelings in body and mind, vindictively

revising certain well-known lines in this wise:

> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die,
> Stupid old nurses!

And I did not mean it to be complimentary, for to me just then it seemed as if it were "theirs but to do" and mine "but to die." The noble obedience was theirs, but the risk was mine.

You may imagine that my peace of mind was not restored when we found out in the morning that the doctor had not meant to cut off my "hypo," and that the heroic obedience had been to a fancied rather than a real order. I had another choice line or two about "some one had blundered" then, but I knew that the nurse felt as badly as I did, and had really tried to emulate the "noble six hundred" in her unquestioning, absolute obedience.

Even if some one had blundered, it was a splendid example of the respect, almost awe, with which a doctor's order is regarded.

And it is proper, for half the doses that a nurse must give are not agreeable; and if she regarded the argument and protests of unwilling patients, who often cannot look further than temporary comfort, she would omit most of her treatments. From personal recollection, and with mortification, I solemnly declare that the average sick and sore person is as peevish and unreasoning as a six-months-old infant; and without great tact, some force in overcoming patients' objections, nurse and doctor could never restore health and strength.

Isn't it a fairly good representation of the way of a man with his God? We put our sick souls in the hands of the Great Physician with the express purpose of being made whole. But if the Lord's *modus operandi* doesn't strike us favorably we revolt. Unless he can heal us without pain, discomfort, or lowering our self-esteem we sometimes prefer to keep our soul sick and unhealthy. What a good many people want is something in religion corresponding to painless dentistry. They

want "sins removed without pain, remorse, or repentance." And the church which will put up such a guarantee on its signboard will have as many gullible applicants for admission as do painless dentistry parlors —with results just about as unsatisfactory.

No, there is no easy street that leads to justification and heaven. There is a street called Straight; and we have to go it blind, betimes. The way of the cross is stained with blood, and strewn with thorns, not roses. No man nor system can offer to absolve sin and remove the burden of guilt without more or less pain, inconvenience, and real, discomforting repentance. It is a quack system as surely as is any method which pretends to remove a leg or arm without the slightest inconvenience to the patient. The amputation of a sin, which has become a part of a man, must necessarily be attended by loss of a certain amount of corrupt flesh and impure blood. The "old man" will not be expelled except after a fight. God does not demand physical penance to atone for sin, but he does

demand spiritual penance such as is involved in real confession. A genuine, acceptable confession is very apt to cause us a disagreeable lowering of our self-esteem, and exposure of some dark, unsavory past errors that we did not care to have dragged out into the light of day. Thus in the process of getting well spiritually we shall have to submit to many things that interrupt our temporary comfort and equanimity. Shall we rebel, like a foolish patient? Shall we continue to carry the fatal disease rather than drive it out with an unpleasant potion? Shall we preserve the poisoned member, that it may spread slow death throughout our whole body, or "cut it off and cast it from us"?

What Regulates Our Life?

Then, too, that implicit, painstaking obedience which the nurses exercised will abide long in my memory as an example of what our attitude ought to be toward the will of God. The first thing that a nurse does, I have noticed, when she begins a day's or a

night's work, is to read the orders which have been put on the "book"; and the last thing before going off duty is to read them again, to make sure that every one has been carried out to the letter. She may not understand the purpose of many of them; may not know the ingredients of many doses she administers; sometimes the orders run counter to her own judgment; but in no case would she disobey or alter an order.

How much happier and more effective our lives would be if such obedience to God marked our day's work, if we should stop at the beginning of a day, or at the undertaking of every task, and make sure what the "orders" from above relative to that thing were, and guide our actions in accordance therewith! How much more like Christ we would be if our only concern about a given line of conduct was, not what fun, wealth, or honor we were going to secure, but what the will of God in that regard was. Sometimes that will may appear unnecessary, even cruel or arbitrary,

or strangely contradictory to common sense. But we display the mark of the Son of God when we do not rebel or question about incomprehensible orders, but say, even with the shadow of Calvary ahead, "Thy will, not mine, be done," and cheerfully set about the execution of that order. And by this continued obedience to the will of God all through life's activities we earn the recognition of Jesus as spiritually his "mother, and brother, and sister."

Of course God's orders are hard to obey sometimes. What wise and brave general issues only agreeable commands? One night during the war of the rebellion the officers of Grant's staff gathered in council to protest against any further advance at once. The men were worn out, supplies were getting low, and to them it was arrant madness to advance. The silent general heard all their arguments to the finish, their pleas for the worn-out soldiers, and then, when they had finished, having conclusively showed the impossibility of marching to attack, Grant brought the

matter to a close by the brief command: "We will march to-morrow at daylight. The enemy are tired out too." And is he a soldier who refuses to obey an order from his superior because it is difficult to execute? Nay; he who disobeys from difficulty, or because he does not understand the purpose, or deem it expedient, is no soldier, but a rebel and a coward.

The Negro preacher caught the true spirit of obedience when he said: "If Ah finds a command in dis book whar God says fo' me to jump through a stone wall, Ah's gwine to jump *at* it. Jumpin' at it is mah part; goin' through b'longs to God." God's followers often received commands to do the "impossible," or what entailed suffering. Ezekiel was told to make a valley of dry bones get up and walk. Moses was instructed to divide the waters of the Red Sea; and a paralyzed man was ordered to pick up his bed and walk! And in the spirit of obedience which started to do those things, seemingly impossible, the miracle was wrought. And if His com-

mand leads us into the fiery furnace, or against an overtowering giant, we may be sure that the flames shall not burn, nor the giant prevail against us.

The Thing Called Happiness

Did it ever occur to you how purely comparative the thing called happiness is? No one can put his finger on this or that event or condition and say, "There is happiness." No man can say to his neighbor, "Do this and you will be happy," in the sense of pure physical happiness. Happiness is dependent absolutely on one's present condition compared with his previous circumstances. The goal marked "Happiness" is not in the same spot for everyone. In fact, for a given individual, it recedes and advances with amazing eccentricity. For example, there were days which come vividly to mind when a few hours' sleep would have filled my cup of happiness to the brim; other times when, lying alone and unable to secure it, a cup of water would have brought to my parched throat more de-

light than ambrosial nectar. Many mornings I lay in my room, where I could get a glimpse of the courtyard, and watched a washerwoman hanging clothes on a line, and envied her lot as fervently as Lot coveted the fat plains of Sodom. I would have bartered away education, prospects—everything I had—for that rough woman's ability to stand up with full possession of physical powers and hang those clothes (mess of pottage, though it seems now). Sometimes I have actually wished that I could change places with the dogs which I could see running around in the grass on a hillside outside the window, as they ran here and there in the sunshine of God's out of doors, while I had to lie motionless on a hard bed. To-day those thoughts seem foolish, and almost profane. It is because my body is in a different condition to-day, and my mind more orderly and fit to judge of true values.

Everyone has known his ideals and ideas to change in similar manner. When a little chap you coveted no more glorious ex-

perience than you felt sitting astride a gaily painted warhorse, going round and round to the noisy music of a merry-go-round. Yet to-day you flee from those same sounds as hideous noise. To a poor man a horse and carriage represent vast opportunities of pleasure and profit, but the millionaire scorns anything less than a six-cylinder, forty-horse-power touring car. To a man with two good legs a walk on crutches does not suggest great delight, but for a man who has lain in bed and sat in a chair for a year a creeping walk down a carpeted hall on two crutches is cause for great joy and as much congratulation as the winning of a Marathon race would be to an athlete. A thousand similar instances might be invoked to show how variable and comparative a thing happiness is—how dependent on personal environment and ideals, conditions and customs.

Joy of a New Birth

That may partially explain the joy and exhilaration of the newborn soul. Having

been in the darkness of sin long, the rising sun of salvation dazzles and delights him with ineffable bliss. Having carried a load of guilt all his life, the redeemed one must feel all joy is found in the rolling off of that burden from his shoulders. And the joy of the conversion experience we should naturally expect to be commensurate with the blackness of the sinful life before, the weight of the sin carried through many years. To a man who had wandered in such pitch blackness as Paul, the experience might well be an illumination above the light of noonday sun, and in such a man's account of Christian experiences we might look for "joy unspeakable," "glories," and doxologies. To the unrepentant, self-satisfied Pharisee the presence of Jesus at his board meant little; but to the sinning woman, who had been pardoned for her many black iniquities and given a new, clean nature, it meant the bliss of heaven itself to be near him, and prompted a gratitude which showed itself in tears bedewing the feet of her Master.

For, "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Perhaps on the same consideration may be explained the ecstasy and demonstrative joy which converts from the lower classes exhibit, and which to those who have never been freed from such revolting sins may seem weakly emotional, extravagant, or vulgar.

Heaven, Therefore, Not to Be Defined in Dogmatic Precision

For similar reasons heaven cannot be set down as a particular condition, or set of conditions, the same for all, such as gold streets, jeweled walls, ceaseless rest, and music of harps. Possession of gold and jewels does not signify unusual splendor or delight to some who have all their life here been surrounded by such costly metal and stones. And everlasting rest would not be a thing even to be desired by the invalid who all her days had been "resting" in the sense of being unable to work. Even idleness accompanied by harps of joyous sound would not fulfill her dreams of hap-

piness like the ability to move and work. No, heaven cannot be described in terms of material delight, for delight is so uncertain and variable a thing. Heaven can be described to human understanding only by saying that it is that place or condition where the holiest and truest ideals of each person are realized, where the highest conception of happiness which the individual harbored during life shall come into fruition. Only this must be stipulated: the most perfect joy a pure heart can know, nearness to Jesus, that one absolute and unsurpassable standard of happiness, will be attained by each one of us.

As for other things, our conditions now, our dreams and hopes are so many that it were folly and presumption for anyone to describe the Celestial City or life. For the weary it is rest; for the hungry, food; for the lonely, heaven were friends; for the feeble, health. The kingdom of God in heaven is the making universal the kingdom of God on earth, where the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the

lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. What more need we know concerning the abode of the blest? Why speculate as to the color of streets or the architecture of the walls? It is enough to know that there every pure desire shall be satisfied, every unselfish dream come true, and every vestige of sadness shall vanish; sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Thus, however various our conditions and ideals here, we may know that heaven means the complete satisfaction of that ideal—the filling of every want which is in harmony with the lofty character of that land where God is the light.

Nor Hell Located and Its Temperature Taken

The irresistible conclusion is that heaven is an impossible and unthinkable place to him who has cherished no good thing or had no just or holy thing as his *summum bonum*. Base, corrupt desires would no

sooner ripen there than roses bloom in a rock heap. He who has cherished unholy purposes, impure and hateful imaginings, as his idea of bliss is doomed only to disappointment, remorse, and banishment from all good—not by an arbitrary fiat, but by the perversion of his own ideals of happiness. As the chaff is swept away by the wind, or as the wood, hay, stubble are consumed by fire, so naturally and irrevocably is the wicked barred from the ripening of any pure ideal, borne away from heaven to eternal disappointment. Then, it may be, as his unholy, base ideals reach their consummation in some condition of unspeakable vileness, in the lightning flash of doom he is given a glimpse of the unpassable gulf—a quick, poignant sense of what he has missed—and left to brood eternally over the saddest words in tongue or pen, "It might have been."

It is in ourselves—our present circumstances and ideals of right and happiness—that our eternal destiny is fixed. Goats are not made goats, nor sheep, sheep, at the

time of dividing. The Judge does not make the sheep- or goat-nature; he only recognizes it and divides them according to a type already established. Can his love or justice be impeached for seeing what already exists? The kingdom of heaven "hereafter" as well as "here" is "within you" now, and forever; or else the kingdom of hell is there. And no one put it there or keeps it there but you!

CHAPTER IV

Cui Bono?

The Question of a Chastened Child

In common with unnumbered thousands of bewildered pupils who have been in the school of affliction, I have often wondered "what it was all about," "why it was permitted." Lying unmovable in bed with the sunshine outdoors inviting, and the work of the world calling, I have through many an hour searched earnestly for some satisfying method to justify "the ways of God to men," especially such ways of undeserved tribulation as comes upon so many children. A man who is smitten hard by the hand of God (or, as some may prefer to put it, smitten hard by the hand of Satan, God permitting) will do one of two things: he must inevitably drift away from a position of trust in God and his goodness, or else he will evolve or discover some "philosophy," though it may not

bear that name, which reconciles his present affliction and his conception of God's goodness. A father's chastisement is bound either to drive his son away in rebellion or draw him nearer with a purer, clearer love. During the days that I struggled in the semidarkness to find this *raison d'être* for a body half-paralyzed, and a life hope wholly crushed, I lighted on some pregnant words in a rather long and involved sentence of Peter's first letter (1 Pet. 1. 3–8), which, when I had reflected on them for a time, let the light into my darkened soul with such relief as the wanderer in a deep, dark cave must feel when he sees a glimmer of sunshine in the distance. The particular words which let in the light were these: "Now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter's deliberate "that," placed after "ye have been put to grief,"

quickened my troubled mind to discover, or at least get a clue to, the answer of the problem of ages, which just then was also a very pertinent and personal question to me, that is, the use of "manifold trials" in a Christian's life. Peter seemed here to be calmly setting out to show the Christians of the dispersion what was the good of their grief. So I paused at Peter's "that" and proceeded slowly and prayerfully to discover, if I might, what the apostle's philosophy of trouble might be, what consolation he could offer his afflicted brothers then and now. A man will endure, or accept calmly, almost anything if he can see sufficient reason for it, or ultimate good to come from it.

The Big Problem Peter Attacks

I knew that it was a tremendous project he undertook. To find the "missing link" between a Christian's affliction and God's mercy, to bolster the faith of a hard-smitten believer, is no light recreation for the afternoon. There is a wide gap to be

filled or bridged, a great "aching void" that needs to be occupied with sane, soothing reason. Suffering is as old as human hearts. Ever since God established perfect, harmonious laws governing this earth man has broken those laws, that is, "sinned," and thereby brought sickness, sorrow, and death upon himself as the penalty.

Shut our eyes to it, theorize about it, deny it all we may, trouble and affliction are here, and have always been here. They come to the good and the bad; saint and sinner suffer alike. The devouring fire knows no difference between a martyr and a traitor. The falling tree crushes the just man as heavily as it does the prowling thief; diphtheria lays waste the home of a God-fearing Christian as remorselessly as it does the home of an infidel. Goodness and piety are no guarantee against sickness, accident, or death. In truth, it seems sometimes as though the children of God were chastened more severely than the children of the devil. Often we see the

sinner spreading himself like a green bay tree, while the saint languishes in poverty or is bathed in hot tears of bereavement. Only recall how the noblest of God's men have suffered. Elijah, hounded by a wicked king, driven to the hills and rocks in hunger and thirst; Daniel, who defiled not himself, given over to the lions; the three young Hebrews, who would not bow to the graven image, tossed into the fire; David, the sweet singer of Israel, compelled to suffer a broken heart, and weep, "Would God I had died for thee, Absalom, my son, my son"; Job, the upright man, given over to the merciless affliction of the Evil One. To realize how universal, and how apparently unjust, is suffering, we have only to review these and all the suffering saints of history who have been stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, gone about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, illtreated, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes of the earth; all that "noble army, men and boys, the matron and the maid,"

> Who climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil, and pain.

Bereavement, like God, is no respecter of persons. "Man that is born of woman"—that is, every man—"is of few days and full of trouble."

The Sunday School Reason for Trial

When we thought of these things in Sunday school, as little children (if we may call it "thinking"), the reason and justification of these virtuous men's trouble never bothered us a bit. For our simple, trustful minds there used to be a skeleton key which opened the mystery of every case of a good man's persecution. When we were asked why Abraham had to leave a pleasant, comfortable home in Ur to wander in unknown lands, the safe and ready answer was, "To try his faith." Why did he have to go through all the tortures of slaying his son, to be prevented at the actual deed? "To try his faith." Why should the righteous man, Job, lose everything dear to him, and then suffer bodily

torture? "To try his faith." So, down through the list of good men that suffered, we could always justify it by that pious-sounding and convenient phrase, "To try his faith." It was enough for credulous child minds, the "open sesame" at which the doors of that baffling problem swung open and the goodness of God was preserved! It may be that some of us since childhood have tried to quell the rebellious thoughts engendered of fiery trials in the same way.

But when the days of childish credulity are past, that magic phrase fails to satisfy. We want to know the "why" of a burden, the "wherefore" of a testing. Despite the poetic exhortation, it is hard to

> Welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit, not stand, but go!
> Be our joy three parts pain!

We would know the reason for that three parts that is pain. We demand to know *why* God tests our faith, and how faith is any

more valuable after testing than before. Now, Peter, in his letter of condolence, essays to explain the pain part, and show the value of sorely tried faith. But, in the words he writes, his promise seems to be far from fulfilled; his reach much exceeds his grasp. He does not say expressly how this faith which has been proved in fire is any more valuable than any other faith, but seems to beg the question by putting, in a parenthetical participle, the crux of the whole question—"*being* more precious than gold that perishes though it is proved by fire." Just *how* "more precious" he appears to assume that everyone knows, and so hurries over the very point that many look most eagerly for. Many of us do not know just what the value of a tested faith is. To find this value, and fill out the important step of Peter's rapid logic, I spent some time in meditation. And the effort of discovering for myself some of these missing values, so often obscured by pain, was richly rewarded, as the labor of a miner who after much digging comes upon

a nugget of pure gold, is repaid a thousandfold.

Three Values of a Proved Faith

By earnest heart-searching and observation I came to the conclusion that the tested, tried faith of a believer is of exceeding value in three respects at least. And each of these three values of a tested, triumphant faith is, of course, a justification of God's allowing faith to be so tested.

First: Worth to the Tested

First, the faith which has been tried is of higher value than the untried to the possessor of that faith himself. The one most directly and quickly benefited is the man who has found out, by process of suffering, that he possesses a

> faith that will not shrink,
> Though pressed by every foe,
> That will not tremble on the brink
> Of any earthly woe.

Blessed is the man who, having prayed for that sort of faith, knows by experience that it is his. The process of proving a

man's faith either destroys it utterly or strengthens it mightily. It is only by risking his weight upon his shaky legs, trying again and again till success comes, that the invalid learns to trust the strength of his limbs. It is by trusting all our burdens on the promises that a burdened one *knows* the worth of God's promises. Not till he has met and grappled with every sort of problem that confronts him does he know the supremacy of mind over all things. Certainty and confidence, physical or spiritual, come only to him that has met and conquered opposition.

Many Christians have a faith which is well-nigh valueless to themselves, as well as to others, because it has never been subjected to pressure. It is like an unused arm which slowly atrophies because it never meets or overcomes resistance. Here lie two boats tugging at their anchors, to either of which we may trust our life and fortune. One is fresh from the shipbuilder's dock; every spar and rope brand-new—engine and boiler never heated by fire; propeller never

turned in water; decks, furnishings, all unmarred by wear. Gleaming in fresh paint, bright and perfect as builders' theory can make it, the boat rises and falls gracefully with the swell of the ocean—*but* it never has made a trip. Theoretically it is perfect; experimentally it is unknown. The other boat is more weather-beaten; the sides have been pounded by the waves till some of the paint is gone. Ropes and cable have been worn by use. Rudder, propeller, and engines have lost the shine of newness, for they have been tested; they have driven and guided the ship through real storms, and the elements have been defeated by them. Though not so jaunty in appearance, the latter boat is proved seaworthy; and to her the wise man trusts his life, for she has been tried. She inspires confidence and promises safety in the midst of storm, while the other is still untested.

Unweathered Faith

Now, some spiritual faith is like an untried boat; it may be sound, it may be

unsound. Sometimes our religion looks good externally; theoretically it is all right; we label it "orthodox." But it needs weathering; it has never been tried out in the struggle of life. The faith which we take out into the world with us is bound to receive many hard knocks. It receives a jolt from unpopularity. Then sickness, which we can't explain, hits it a hard blow. Our dearest friend dies, and faith nearly dies with him. The career which we had planned is blocked, our hopes crushed, and faith totters with the blows. When faith returns from its struggle against all the forces of spirit and flesh it is like the weather-beaten boat—safer; like the battle-scarred shield—more dependable; like the cut diamond—more radiant and precious.

'Tis only after his faith is proved that Job can cry, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Not until he has been beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned for his faith, can Paul shout, "I know whom I have believed." Not until he had lived almost a hundred years, buffeted by the world,

finally exiled for his belief in Christ, could John write, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." These men had theorized before; they had written inspiringly; but they *knew* then. Luther never knew the saving power of faith until he had struggled with his doubts and questions in the monk's cell and found the victory that overcometh the world, "even our faith." As the love of the aged man for his white-haired helpmeet, tested and true through years of common burdens and sorrows shared, is stronger than the love of a youth for a maiden, so is the faith that has been shaken by grief, wrenched by persecution, stronger and more precious than the untried faith.

No, God is not satisfying his curiosity in testing men's faith. He doesn't bow men in grief just to see how much they will stand before they "curse God and die." I have no such heartless God as that. The testing of Abraham, of Elijah, of Peter, and all the saints from the beginning till now was not for God's sake, primarily,

but for theirs—to reveal to them the worth, the staying power of that faith which they had. It was to enhance to them the value of that which they possessed, unknowingly sometimes. The teacher who sets hard problems for his pupil is not satisfying his own desire, but trying to awaken the mind of the child, and bring him to realize the possibilities of mind and reason. So, many of us struggle and fret out our lives with the problem of sorrow and injustice that comes to us. But out of that struggle and pain is born the glorious conviction that faith is the most precious thing in life or death.

Its Worth to Beholders

A proved faith is precious, not alone to its possessor, but to those who witness it. Indeed, its effect upon others is most marked and helpful. What to-day is the strongest argument for Christianity? If I wanted to present the religion of Christ in the strongest possible form, I would not look in the pages of Christian philosophy or dogmatic theology. The most effective

argument in favor of Christianity is found in the purified, sweetened faith of a Christian man or woman who has suffered affliction, and come out of it crying with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Theories and arguments may be undermined, but the irresistible proof of the value of a Christian faith is in the trust of a humble soul that neither sickness nor disappointment nor death can shake. In the sanitarium where I spent seven months there lived a young woman who for years had not been able to go outside her room. At times she was racked with indescribable pain; she could not even enjoy God's sunlight, but had to live, day after day, in a darkened room. In a room, not far from hers, lay her father, hopelessly paralyzed. Under all these afflictions, the girl, for she was hardly more, had a spirit as bright and cheerful as an angel's; a visit to her room was inspiring; she had so far forgotten herself that solely by the power of prayer she raised over two thousand dollars for a hospital for crippled

children in China. Calm, sweet, patient, the chastened faith of that young woman preached stronger sermons in that sanitarium and thereabouts than the most eloquent preachers who have stood in the beautiful chapel below her room. The remark which nurses, attendants, everyone who came in contact with her, most frequently made was, "If there ever was a Christian, she is one."

What could the sophistry and chicanery of the Pharisee do against the testimony of a Lazarus, or an erstwhile blind man who declares, emphatically, "Whether he be sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"? That thing which compels the attention and respect of men to-day is a whole multitude of humble believers who say: "The source and purpose of this bitter sorrow I know not. One thing I do know: the consolation of God is sufficient—my faith in him has only been deepened."

That genuine, reliable recommendation appeals to the hard-headed man of to-day.

He wants things certain when he buys and sells. The iron which goes into the best buildings, automobiles, and machinery must be tested before it is purchased. A bridge must sustain so much pressure per square foot before it is accepted from the builder. And the religion which the practical man of to-day accepts is that one which he has seen put to the test and survive the severest strain. The same principle explains why the church grew by leaps and bounds when Roman emperors tried to crush it out with persecution. The faith which mocked at prison walls, survived the bloody scenes of the arena, flourished in midst of flame, recommended itself to others faster than insane emperors could stamp it out.

Kingdoms are not won to Christ by the words of preachers, but by the blood of martyrs. Prophets could have preached forever in the idolatrous kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, but they would never have turned that king and land from worshiping idols nor elicited the words which the spectacle of three young men walking in

furnace flames for the sake of their God called forth from the astonished king: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, . . . Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." That was a victory of faith, literally tried in the fire.

A tested faith is the best advertisement for the religion of Christ because it stamps "Sterling" upon a man's profession. When onlookers find it they know that there is no empty sham, no mere veneer of religion. A plated religion would have been destroyed with the heat of suffering. This which has come out unimpaired must be genuine, pure, and undefiled before God and man.

Such Faith Precious Too in God's Sight

We see, then, that this proved faith is

peculiarly valuable to the one tested, to the world observing it; and, finally, may we not complete this trinity of values by saying that a proved faith is precious to God himself? Not that God gloats over the sorrows of man, or demands human heartbreaks and sacrifice to complete his nature or happiness; not even that God sends trouble. But, in one sense, the odor of incense is sweet to God. He does prize most highly that devotion which neither height nor depth, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come could weaken. The love of a baby boy is precious to the earthly father. But when that boy has grown to be a man, strong and noble like his father; after he has borne unpopularity, abuse, poverty, that he may be true to his father's teaching, loyal to his father's name, there must be a pride mingled with that father's love for his boy which was not there before. The child has proved himself a son, a worthy son in whom the father may take delight. So I believe God delights in his children, espe-

cially when they have proved themselves true to him in spite of every allurement of the devil, every affliction that the king of death can inflict. If the death of his saints is precious in God's sight, how much more highly must God value their life, when for his sake they "die daily"?

It is this Godward side of the value of their fortitude that Peter reminds his readers of. "That the proof of your faith, . . . may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." In other words, the apostle says that the bravery and faith which you have displayed in your persecution is to appear to the praise and honor and glory of Jesus Christ. In nobly bearing sorrows you are not only benefiting yourself, but your triumphant faith enhances the glory of Jesus Christ. "At the revelation" doesn't necessarily mean at some future time at the close of the dispensation. It means now, in the burdens borne, in the grief that bows one to the earth, Christ is revealed, if faith in God's love and wisdom

persists. Where the widow drops a tear upon the face of her dead child and says, "Thy will be done," there the world is given a glimpse of Christ—a second Gethsemane. Where the strong man is brought low by sickness, and his loved ones face starvation, while he still declares with unshaken faith, "All things work together for good to them that love God," there is a revelation of the Man of Sorrows. In the tragedies of life on every side, where men struggle alone with grief and come off true to God, there is Via Dolorosa; where a Savonarola, a Paul, a Peter, or a Wycliffe gives his heart's blood that others may have the true gospel of Christ, there is a Calvary, Christ is revealed and God is glorified. Though men can never know the full intensity of the Saviour's agony, countless men and women, in crowded cities and lonely farms, are echoing from their hearts the cry of the Christ, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the blackness of their despair they truly believe that God has forsaken them, that his

ear is as deaf as Baal's to the imprecation of his priests on Carmel. But God has not forgotten them; his face is not turned away (it was never so near). He does note the sparrow's fall, and he does suffer with the child of his whose heart is broken. And the worn, distracted soul that trusts faithfully will hear, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." The bodies that are wrecks of disease or shattered by accident shall feel that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

Think you not that these patient souls, who reveal in their suffering a Saviour who was bruised and wounded, reviled and obedient unto death, are precious in the sight of God? The tried faith of these is more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be proved by fire, for it shall never perish. Such persistent, triumphant faith lives forever. Proved and true, it stands as an invitation to all men to accept the same God. Glorified and chastened, it shines throughout eternity to light the city of God. And of these, whether of Peter's

age, or the present time, whose faith in the living God is proved, it will be said, when they stand among the blest: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

CHAPTER V

From the Chair into the Pulpit

The Bitterest Pain to Bear

The hardest thing about this rude and unexpected blow with a half-ton derrick which had inaugurated me into the place of wheel-chair philosopher was, all along, not the physical pain, but mental despair, the bitter disappointment which confronted me in regard to my lifework. Since I had been old enough to wish anything I had wished I could be a preacher. I do not know when any "call" came. There were no cherubim, nor coals of fire, no miraculous voice from above or below, but, somehow, as naturally as I grew into long trousers I grew into the idea of being a minister. I can now barely remember climbing up into a chair, when a little boy, to wave my hands and arms frantically and make believe to preach. I suspect that those early ventures into homiletics must

have had more gesture than gospel (a fault which some of us who are older preachers still possess). When I was about six years old I declared confidentially to a group of amused friends that "I believed I would be a preacher if I only knew what to say."

The dream of childhood had grown more and more distinct, until, hastened perhaps by a big brother in the ministry, it ripened into ambition, then into preparation for the work of preaching. All the years of education, from childhood up, I spent trying to find "what to say," until, at the time of the accident, I was prepared as well as college and seminary could prepare me to "say it." And then! With the fall of that derrick my air castle was shivered into pieces. The hardest blow that afternoon, and that one which looked most surely fatal, was the one which crushed my hope of preaching. In a second of time the cherished dreams of twenty years and the direct preparation of ten years were shattered. As I used to sit and reconstruct air castles out of the remains of the fallen

ones, I repeated often to myself the scripture which said that Jesus "sat down" to teach the people, and, as a sort of vain hope, dwelt upon the careers of a few illustrious preachers who had sat down in their preaching. But, inwardly, I knew that sitting down to teach had gone irrevocably out of fashion, and that there was nothing illustrious enough about me to induce any congregation to come and hear me preach sitting in a wheel chair. It did look, however I might try to evade the fact, as though to me the preaching vocation had been closed; that door seemed to be shut and barred against me. It was this fact which hurt every time I faced it. I believe that the only times I ever wept during the two years of helpless waiting were on some Sunday mornings when the sound of ringing church bells was wafted into my room, and it came over me with a sickening flash that I, who had aspired to be the preacher and pastor of a church, could not even go to worship with other people in answer to the call of the "sweet church bell."

Hoping (and Preparing) Against Fate

But still I kept hoping against fate, and harbored deep in my heart a determination that I should yet proclaim the gospel. This I did against the counsel of the most hopeful physician who had treated me, and who had kindly but firmly assured me that I could never follow so active a vocation as preaching, though I might enter some quiet, sedate line of work like teaching. But the work of teaching never had any charm for me, even if I had possessed any ability for it; so I kept up my preparation, nosed around in the theological books of the sanitarium library, and studied a little Greek Testament each day, just as though I expected to receive a call to a church any day. I even came upon an auction sale of an old minister's books, and carried a dozen of them home with as much triumph and joy as any pastor in the active work. When I became strong enough to walk (or wabble) on two canes my hope shot up many degrees higher. I went so far as to inform superintendents of nearby districts that I

was "available as a pulpit supply," and wrote to my elder brother (whom I always considered capable of accomplishing anything he desired) to look for a vacancy for me in his Conference. In my eagerness to be at my chosen and loved work I could overlook obstacles and difficulties as easily as did Caleb in the land of the giants and Philistines. If a man could walk between two canes, it appeared to me that he ought easily to stand still and preach behind a pulpit. The matter of getting to the pulpit, or doing parish work, I naïvely overlooked or trusted God for improvement enough to cover those discrepancies in my plans.

"Hope Deferred"

So I waited, hoped, prayed, and prepared for the opening that was to appear, just as if I knew some official members were even then framing a call to me. Writing on a board laid over the arms of my chair, I even prepared a couple of sermons for imaginary congregations. But of these ser-

mons ever lodging in anyone's heart I am skeptical, just as I doubt that one could hit a bull's eye, shooting at an imaginary target. Day after day I waited, but in vain. Mail after mail I awaited, looking eagerly for some message from somewhere that would open a crack, at least, in the door of opportunity, but all uselessly. Day after day slipped by, until "hope deferred" nearly indeed made my "heart sick." The monotony of dressing, meals, baths, treatments went on undisturbed by anything more exciting than a tumble in the middle of the road, which I took one day while I was showing off how well I could walk with my canes. No one seemed anxious to get a four-legged preacher; no message came. I became so despondent that I began to wonder if I really could be a professor, and to speculate whether I was more qualified to teach Greek, physical culture, domestic science, or manual training, or whether I would have to take a "deestric skule" and teach them all at once.

At Last

But at last it came! I sat one day in my wheel chair, just about a year after I had "quit work" so peremptorily, when the yellow envelope of the Western Union Telegraph Company was handed to me. I knew, without opening it, that my "call" had come. I knew then that God had heard the prayers; and, after proper lessons in the fine art of waiting, had answered me. Though it came in different manner than Isaiah's, Samuel's, or Paul's, that Western Union Telegraph Company's yellow envelope was just as distinctly divine a call as though it had come by way of cherubim, a still, night voice, or a noonday blaze. The message of the telegram was simply to "come at once," signed by my brother. Where and why were left for me to assume, but I did not spend much time debating either question. I walked by faith. I just went out like Abraham, toward Canaan, or like Paul going down into the street called Straight to wait for further orders.

Glad, and Sad Exit

Several great men, like Trajan, Hannibal, Xerxes, and Cæsar, have had "triumphal entries"; but I had a triumphal exit from that sanitarium after seven months of crippled life there. While I was reluctant to leave many good friends, I was glad to bid farewell to pain, dependence, and uselessness, and took to the joy of service which I trusted was set before me now. What though I did have a cane in each hand to steady me, it was better than being carried on and off the train, as when I had come out there. I was able to walk into a passenger car and sit down, and that was infinitely better than being trundled into a baggage car with trunks and dogs. It seemed to me as I was carried away on the train that morning that the Great Divide in my life was reached; another chapter of my life was about to open. Invalidism, nursing, chairs—all these were behind. That door of opportunity and usefulness which for a year had seemed tight shut and barred was even now being unbarred,

and was showing a crack of light along the edge. Though the beyond was entirely mysterious and unknown as yet, still, with the sight of a gleam, there was hope of the day beyond, and I was determined to follow the gleam and trust God to broaden the crack and brighten the ray.

"On Trial" in the World

At nightfall I was at my brother's town, where I was to receive my "marching orders." As I came slowly off the train there and walked along as bravely as I could with my two canes helping me, there began a period, extending over the next few months, which I might call my "preliminary examination" in the world of activity. I was out here in the world again; in a measure I was "on my feet" once more, or endeavoring to be, and a candidate for a man's work in the world. From that afternoon when my brother cordially welcomed me I knew that almost all who looked at me were estimating the probabilities of my success or failure, weigh-

ing my chances of keeping up with the procession of world's workers. And the chances did look slim while I had to cling to two canes, and had the pallor of a year's invalidism still on my face. I doubt if many who saw me and knew of the fight which was on would have risked much money staking me as a winner. But I went blandly along, "my hat in the ring," and determined it would stay there until another accident or relapse "kicked it out."

My brother gave me my directions and much good advice, and sent me off to the town up north where I was to make my determined try for life and health and work. He said many encouraging things which were calculated to inspire and strengthen me for that first Sunday's work, but down in his heart he had little expectation that I would actually "make good." I know that small hope was mingled with much kindness of heart because of a letter he wrote me, to reach me Monday after the first Sunday, in which he exhorted me not to take it hard if I had failed to get through

the work all right on the day previous, and advised me what to do in case of failure, and reproached himself for having sent me out in so difficult a field when I was physically unqualified.

My Début as a Preacher Once More

But while he was penning this letter which was to serve me as a cushion to let me down easy when I fell back in disappointment, I was speeding north on a train, trustfully, blissfully ignorant of his faithlessness, and full of hopes and dreams of rosy hue. The manner of this opportunity that had come was on this wise: A country pastor had suddenly left the ministry; a circuit of two churches was left pastorless in the middle of the year, and superintendent and officials were anxious to fill the vacancy without delay. Being near at hand, and more ready (and anxious) to go than any available man, I was given the chance. I was to go, preach a few Sundays, try the work, and let folks examine me. Then if both parties were satisfied there

was a possibility of my remaining until Conference in the spring. My stock in the success of the venture was not rated very high. I was below par, and going down with every person that looked at me from the time I arrived in P——.

A benevolent old gentleman met me at the station—fortunately, with a horse and carriage. He took me to the house where I was to board and left, inwardly wondering, I think, whether the superintendent had gone crazy to send them a man who looked as though he ought to be abed, and wondering more at the audacity of the man who would pose as a preacher and impose on a helpless Methodist church. Pretty soon other official brethren appeared to "look over" what had arrived. A few escorted me across the way to the church that I might see the place which was to be the scene of my "trial heat" on the morrow. It was a fine, neat, well-kept country church; all the men appeared to be keen and sympathetic. One who has never felt the tug of the preacher-man can

never know how I longed, as I looked at the pulpit, to have it to call "mine"—a place from which I could tell the glorious truth of Jesus who had saved me, body and soul, from death, and saved me to serve.

A Memorable Sunday for Me

After having inspected things, and having been inspected, the Saturday wore away, and Sunday was upon me. A memorable Sunday was that (in my little world). I opened my eyes on that Sabbath morning elated and yet fearful—elated in spirit at the thought of once more having opportunity and strength to preach, yet fearful too lest, in case of failure, it should be my last chance for another long time. On that day I was to test my legs and mouth once more in the King's business. But, profiting by months of waiting and watching, in which time patience had experienced nearly her "perfect work," I ceased worry and anxiety, and went about the work of the day trusting God to carry

me through and make my words acceptable in his sight—and the people's.

I fear there was less worship of God that morning than pity and solicitude for the preacher. Remarks since dropped have revealed to me that I presented anything but a sturdy, robust figure. Not much of the stern and unwavering prophetic vigor about the preacher's carriage and delivery, I fear; but more of a "reed shaken by the wind" I must have been. I sometimes marvel at the patience of the congregation and their willingness to listen again when I think what a figure I must have presented, with the paleness of a year in hospital on my face, a cane in one hand, the other clinging to the pulpit. But I think I looked more feeble than I felt, for, by the time the "preliminaries" were over, the strange, new delightful sensation of leading a congregation once more in worship had worn off, and when I was ready to announce the text there was a strength and exultation in my spirit which the "flesh" flatly belied.

The text, I remember, was a strange yet

appropriate one. It fitted the circumstances perfectly enough to have been sought and applied to this single occasion in particular, but it really was an old text to me, and one which I could now expound and apply with new insight and earnestness: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." In the afternoon I was taken to the "out-appointment" of the church, and in the evening attended and directed the singing at the young people's meeting. Then, after it was all over, and I was back in my boarding-house room, I lay down with the sweetest sensation of grateful weariness that I had known in my life: thankful and glad that I had actually been able to preach again, though weakly, perhaps, and for another whole day to do the work of the Master, which I wanted to be mine. True, I didn't know whether or not

I could do it again; but to do it even once, after all dreams of usefulness had been so nearly dispelled, was joy enough for one day.

I thought of the doctors and nurses that had seen no hope of my living at all. I thought of my mother, who had, like Hannah, set her boy apart for the service of God from the first, had cared for him as tenderly as a mother always cherishes her youngest child, only to see him brought home to her paralyzed and helpless below the waist—a helpless charge, apparently, for life. I thought of that doctor who had said I might do some quiet work like teaching, but that preaching was out of the question. I thought and thought—too happy to sleep—until I fell into a restless slumber, murmuring praise to God for his loving-kindness and his marvelous works to the children of men.

Unreluctant Farewell to the Philosopher

Now, almost a year is gone since that trying Sunday, and the strangest and most blessed thing, is that I have stood every

Sunday since in that same pulpit which I longed (almost against hope) to call "mine." The considerate, kindly people of that country church were generous enough to ask the proper officials to have me stay with them after a few weeks' trial. It may be that they were caught, as many persons are who accept goods "on trial" and dislike to return after they have used them. But I certainly could not have been returned labeled "Damaged by use," for since I came into the community and started to minister to its people I have steadily improved. Surpassing even my own trustful optimism, I have grown away from paralysis, weakness, and every sign of invalidism, getting stronger in muscle, and more robust in health, till now, as I look back on the experience of the two years, the only words that express my emotion are "a miracle of grace." For grace, I believe, extends to body as well as soul; and if there is a "new birth" physically as well as spiritually I have enjoyed that happy experience.

"Silently, one by one," have I dropped the canes, until now I do not need one at all. There is remaining enough of the paralysis (especially in one foot, which I cannot move at all) to keep me from violating the dancing clause of the Methodist Discipline; but, except for a slowness of gait, and a liking for railings on stairs, I am as well and strong as ever. Of course no one, not even Paul, enjoys the "thorns in the flesh," though they keep us from being "exalted above measure"; but after one has been lifted, wheeled, and carried like a baby for a couple of years he is perfectly content to walk slowly or with a "hitch" in his gait.

Thus have I made my sudden début into the "chair of philosophy" and my slow, glad exit from the same into the pulpit. There is not so much time for philosophizing in the active work of mintering, but there is more chance for pure religion and undefiled, more chance to serve others. And that, after all, is the finest thing in the world, that which the

Son of man came to do—"not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Having been brought to appreciate that fact, and be more content and patient in the same, I can truly say that no year of work was ever happier than the one just spent in the country church parish which so kindly received me when my spirit was willing but my flesh so weak to work for them.

Sometimes, as I count the blessings of this one year—a beautiful and loving wife, a comfortable home, a widening circle of good friends, increasing strength to work in the greatest vocation in the world—all these benefits well-nigh atone for the two years of suffering and uncertainty. Often in the days of joyful life and work my mind goes back to the long weeks and months, which now seem like some bad dream. My fancy likes to dwell especially on that morning when I was on the carriage bound for an operation which held the only faint chance of life, when I heard my mother, as she turned from the hall window, say to her beloved boy: "The sun has burst through

a great black cloud. It is a sign for us that our cloud is to be crowned with glory, and that all will be well." Then, as I recall the weird experience of gradually losing consciousness under the effects of ether, at the threshold of the "chamber in the silent halls of death," and think of the subsequent marvelous overruling and leading of Him who has made "all things work together for good," I sing again with stronger emphasis the majestic strain which filled my heart and seemed to lift my body on wings of light from the ether room to the gates of heaven:

> For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
> Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

"Here Endeth the First Lesson"; But There Is More Further on in the Book.

AUG 15 1913

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

YBW 4501

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 063 801 1